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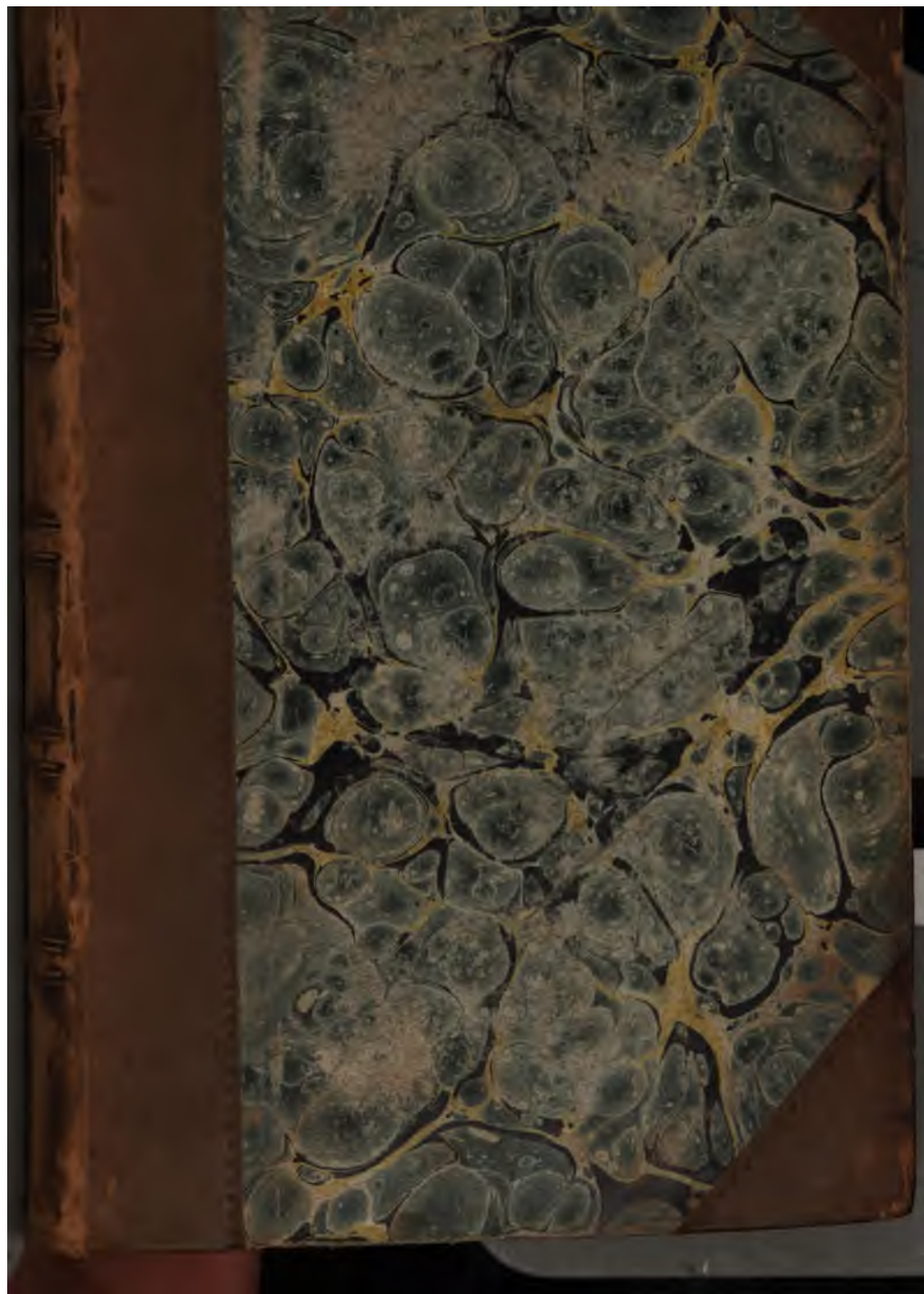
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THE ROBBER.



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THE ROBBER.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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2. WHIPPING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND,

THE ROBBER.

CHAPTER I.

MONTHS passed along, in weary monotony, at the castle of St. Antoine. Spring had glided slowly away, and the summer was far advanced ; and yet Isabella received no tidings, either from the prisoner whom she had assisted to escape, or of him on whom her thoughts were ever fixed, with feelings little short of a painful certainty, that he had gone before her into another world. This idea, at length, she accustomed herself to cherish, and would indulge melancholy yet

soothing fancies, that his spirit might be permitted to look down upon her, and read her thoughts, and behold her actions. And they would mingle even in her private moments of devotion; for when, on bended knee, she implored him who seeth in secret, to shed his blessings, and outstretch His protecting arm to shield those who were near and dear to her, a thrilling sensation of awe would pass over her spirit; and she would shrink, like a guilty thing, before the throne of her Heavenly Father, as though she had dared to proffer supplications for one who had passed the bourne beyond which prayer and repentance are unavailing.

Poor little Eleanor, too, was sadly out of spirits, and would frequently inquire if they were always to live in that dismal place.

“ I used to pity the poor nuns,” said the child, “ but they are much better off than we are; for there is always a great number of them

together, while here there is nobody but you and I, Isabella. I can't think what's become of all the people! There's the old housekeeper, that used to be so kind to me—she's gone. And there's Fido, too—he's gone, like an ungrateful wretch as he is—I never shall like any dog again, I'm sure."

"Don't say so, my dear," said Isabella, "you know Fido was not our dog; and, most likely, he has found his way back to his master."

"Oh, Isabella!" exclaimed the child, "how can you talk so! You told me, the other day, when I asked you where Charles Randolph was, that he was, most likely, in Heaven; and, you know, dogs never go there. Don't look so! don't cry, Isabella! my dear Isabella! What was it I said? tell me! was it wicked? Indeed, indeed, I didn't mean anything wrong." And she threw herself into the arms of her friend,

exclaiming, "Oh dear! I wish we were both in Heaven, too."

All appeared to be going on prosperously, in the meanwhile, with the governor of the castle. His intimacy with the bishop's secretary's deputy procured him other acquaintances of a description that flattered his vanity, and whom he trusted to make useful on some future occasion. Parties from Liege were now frequent—his guests hinted at the rumour of a change in the citadel there, the commandant of which was thought to possess scarcely sufficient experience for so important a charge, in the present awkward state of affairs; and they suggested that it was hardly right that men of ability should allow themselves to be kept in the back-ground by mistaken notions of delicacy. Van Laret listened and was gratified; but money ever took precedence of honour with him, and he, therefore, calculated what was to be spent, as well as

what was to be got. And his next calculation was, in what manner the money must be expended. Much, he knew, was expected from the commandant of a large town. He must invite ladies, and give balls, and soirées, and other entertainments, in which, besides the expenses, he himself took no delight; whereas, at the castle of St. Antoine, the river and the forest supplied the table, and he was quite in his element among a set of jovial fellows round the bottle. But, more than all, he *must* remain where he was till Isabella came of age; for, knowing what he did, he felt the improbability of Monsieur Andelot allowing the orphans to remove with him to the publicity of a large town.

The eventful day, at length, came and passed, and left Isabella in possession of a right to dispose of her own property in any way she thought proper. On the following morning, therefore,

the governor paid her a visit, and, after expressing much regret that he should be under the absolute necessity of making the application, requested the favour of her just to sign "a little document, a mere matter of form, in order to pacify the lawyers, who had now become clamorous for payment. " They have been dunning me terribly for some time," he continued, " but I didn't choose to tell you of it before, mademoiselle, because I knew it would only make you uneasy, and you couldn't do anything in the business then. The sum mentioned here, of a thousand ducats, is merely for form's sake: for, when these fellows can't get money down, they always want security for double the amount, and when they've got this they'll be satisfied, and I don't expect to hear any more of the matter, perhaps for these twelve-months."

Isabella professed not to understand such

affairs; but, as her word had been passed, and she confided in his honour, she hesitated not to sign the paper. Van Laret, judging of others by himself, had anticipated some trifling demur, and was not a little pleased at the facility with which he had got through the affair. But avarice, like ambition, has no bounds, and he scarcely had time to congratulate himself on the success of his duplicity, ere he regretted the smallness of the sum mentioned, and persuaded himself that his victim must have a large fortune, or she would not have so readily acquiesced with his wishes. His original plan was to have gone over to Liege, directly the document was executed, in order to place it in the hands of a lawyer, with instructions to proceed immediately for payment out of whatever property of Isabella's might be in the hands of Monsieur Andelot. His next intended step was, to denounce her and his two other inmates as

heretics, an intention which he had never abandoned, and to which he now more than ever inclined, in consequence of the Duke of Alva's liberality towards informers, many of whom had been rewarded with a portion of the estates belonging to those whom they denounced.

As he rode to Liege with the purpose of executing these nefarious designs, a thought struck him, by which he was induced to defer the information till the following day; and, in consequence, he instructed his lawyer, who had some time previously drawn out the note of hand, "payable on demand," &c., to prepare another of exactly a similar description. With that he then returned home, and represented to Isabella, that he had made a fruitless journey, owing to his ignorance in legal matters.

"But it's no wonder," mademoiselle," said he; "what should we soldiers know of such

things. They ushered me up stairs, and down stairs, and in and out of a parcel of offices ; and then at last said they could do nothing, because I hadn't brought a duplicate, as they call it, which it seems is to be lodged in the court, as they call it, to prove that they have got the real one. Did you ever hear such nonsense, ma'amselle ? However, they will do things their own way, and so I've brought the duplicate with me, and I must go over again to-morrow."

He then threw the note upon the table to receive Isabella's signature as a matter of course ; and, as a matter of course, it was immediately signed by his unsuspecting victim.

When about to repeat his journey on the following day, he received an unexpected visit from a Spanish officer, attended by a couple of dragoons of the same nation. He entered the hall with an air of no small consequence, made

a formal bow to Van Laret, threw himself into a chair, and then drew forth his paper of instructions ; after casting his eye over which, he commenced :

“ Pray, Mien derr Commandant, how many men have you here ? ”

“ Two-and-twenty, including myself and my old steward,” replied the governor.

“ Two-and-twenty ! ” exclaimed the don. “ Why, what possible use can you have for two-and-twenty men up here, on the top of a rock ? ”

“ Not much, Monsieur Le Colonel,” said Van Laret, though he well knew the rank of his visitor was but that of a captain ; “ I have often wondered why I should be required to keep so many here useless, when they might be better employed elsewhere ! ”

“ A very just observation,” observed the captain. “ Well, Monsieur le Gouverneur, my bu-

siness is to ease you of some of them. These infernal heretics are making head again, notwithstanding the sound drubbing we gave them at Gemmingen* the other day. I expect that the Duke is at Maestricht by this time, and we must strengthen our garrison at Liege as much as possible. I must see your fellows. What are they like? I should think half a dozen, at most, will be sufficient for you here."

"You'll find them good stout fellows" said Van Laret, "and able and willing to serve his majesty. Take just as many as you will, my good sir, only leave me an old woman or two to keep up a fire, and I'll engage to send the cursed heretics to the right about, with melted lead and an iron ladle. I'll baptise the infidels with a vengeance! ha! ha! I haven't served for these five-

* The Duke of Alva there defeated Count Lewis, who had entered the country previous to the march of his brother, the Prince of Orange.

and-thirty years, man and boy, without being up to a trick or two..”

The men were drawn up, mounted in line, and the don selected fourteen, who were ordered to prepare for immediate departure for Liege. He then returned into the hall and gave the governor a receipt for that number; and observed,

“ I shall leave you six, because the rascals may send a party this way; and, in case you should be pressed, you must make an arrangement with some of the villagers below, to bring us word, and you’ll only have to hold out for an hour or two. We’ll soon be down upon ’em.

“ Have you any reason to suppose they are near here yet?” replied Van Laret; “ for I have a very particular engagement on business at Liege to-day.”

“ Oh, no!” replied the don; “ they are far enough off at present;—but, after to-day, I

should recommend you to keep close at home. The last intelligence we had states, that they are moving towards Maestricht, where they'll find all ready to receive them, and at Liege, too. But I must say, adieu, Monsieur le Gouverneur! my time is pressing."

The governor, however, prevailed upon him to take some slight refreshment, during the time that the chosen fourteen were preparing for their sudden removal; and then the Spaniard, at the head of his increased force, departed, after paying many compliments to his host, and wishing he might live a thousand years.

"A good riddance!" exclaimed Van Laret, as soon as they were gone; "I don't believe I was ever half paid for what the fellows ate and drank; and now venison's not quite so plenty in the neighbourhood as it was at first. As for the Prince of Orange, what should he want

with such a place as this? Pshaw! if he does venture to come into the country, it won't be to hide himself in a forest, I'm thinking. But, if he should take a fancy to march this way—why—hem! and he turned his purse in his pocket; “a garrison of six invalids is no bad excuse, and one man's money is as good as another's.”

As he had no wish that any one should share, or have an apparent claim, to any part of the profits of his next expedition, he allowed the cavalcade to have the start for an hour, ere he commenced his preparations for departure. He then proceeded to Isabella's apartments, and related to her the events of the morning.

“Under these circumstances, mademoiselle,” said he, “you will do as you think proper; but I should really advise you to remove your quarters, for the present, to Liege, or some large town, where you will be in greater security;

for I must do my duty here, though, from the trifling force now left me, I know what the end will be. We can't hold out long against numbers, and the castle will be taken by storm, and the character of the damned German vagabonds is too well known to expect mercy from them any way. I'm going over to Liege to-day about this law business, and if you and your brother, and the little girl have a mind to ride over with me, we can look about, at all events, and see if there isn't some place that'll suit you, just for a week or so, till we see which way the war goes."

"It is a most unfortunate thing!" exclaimed Isabella, in evident alarm and embarrassment, "my brother has never been absent before, except during the day; and last night he told me that he meant to go on an excursion to some distance, and that I must not be uneasy if I didn't see him again for a week."

"Is he gone?" cried Van Laret, with a violence that startled the person addressed.

"He went early this morning," was the calm reply.

The governor muttered something angrily, but soon recollected himself, and said, "I wish he had been here! but I don't see why that should make any difference either, as he can easily follow you when he returns."

Very little persuasion was necessary to induce the unsuspecting and friendless orphan to accompany her betrayer. Some articles of apparel were hastily packed up. She wrote a few lines, to be delivered to her brother on his return, in which she referred him to Van Laret for her address and further particulars, and then, with Eleanor and the governor, left the castle.

When they arrived at Liege, Van Laret requested his victims to wait his return at the inn, as he must first despatch his legal business,

lest the office hours should be past; he would then, he said, come back immediately and introduce them to a friend of his, whose acquaintance in the town was very extensive, and who would probably be able to assist them in their inquiries.

His affairs with the lawyer were soon arranged, as his only instructions were that not a moment's delay should be risked for realizing the amount of both the notes. He then proceeded to the house of a Spaniard, a well-known, active, and unrelenting member of the "Council of Tumults," and, before him, made his deposition in due form against Isabella, her brother, and young Eleanor.

"Have you known them long?" inquired the counsellor.

"Yes, your excellency," replied Van Laret, "they have been living in my castle very near this twelvemonth."

"Twelve months!" exclaimed the Spaniard, sternly, "twelve months! That is most extraordinary! where are they now?"

"Two of them are at the inn," was the reply, "and I expect the other will return in a few days."

"Let me tell you," continued the counsellor, looking at the paper of information, "that you, Gerard Van Laret, stand yourself in a very ticklish situation. If I were to commit you, I wouldn't give two stivers for your life. Harbours and abetting heretics for twelve months! the thing is monstrous! I *must* commit you. My conscience will not allow me to pass such a case."

Little prepared for this turn in affairs, the miscreant protested that he had no reason to suspect they were heretics till very lately, and represented himself as a faithful subject of the king, a true Catholic, and a man of unsuspected

character, entrusted with a command of some importance, and moreover hinted that his circumstances placed him above the temptation of being bribed to forget his duty.

"Don't tell me," said the haughty Spaniard, "of your being a good Catholic, when you could live, for a year, under the same roof with heretics without suspecting them. The thing is ridiculous! and as for your being an unsuspected character—let that serve you as it may when you come to the question—there is room enough for suspicion now, at all events. And for your property—if you have any, so much the better. We want a few more examples that money will not enable a man to infringe the laws." Then, turning to a clerk, who sat writing at the farther end of the table, he desired him to go into another room and make out a mittimus for Gerard Van Laret.

Left now alone with the inquisitor, the

affrighted villain spoke of his connection with the bishop, and his intimacy with his secretary and other well-known staunch Catholics.

“ All that does not alter the case which you have yourself confessed,” said the unrelenting Spaniard; “ and besides, what have we to do with the bishop? He may be a very good man for aught I know or care; but, if he and his brethren had exerted themselves, long ago, as they ought, the venomous doctrines of heresy never could have overrun the country as they have. And pray how am I to *know* that you are a man of property? any one may *say* that.”

These two last questions were asked in a manner not to be misunderstood by one so practised in the arts of bribery and corruption as Van Laret; and dearly as he loved gold, a criminal prosecution in the Council of Tumults was a matter of too great personal danger to be hazarded for its preservation. He therefore re-

plied, "I should be happy to convince your excellency of the truth of what I say immediately, and would, if I were at home: but, you know, men don't carry their property about with them."

"Humph!" said the Spaniard, somewhat more mildly, "I do not wish to be too hard with any man. Sit down for a moment, and I will tell you what I will do."

He then commenced writing some instructions on a sheet of paper; and when he had finished, stamped on the floor three times, and his clerk immediately appeared with the "mitimus."

"As this gentleman has lodged an information, I think," said he, "we may defer the immediate execution of this document—but, observe these orders," and he handed the paper he had written to the clerk, "and let them be instantly and punctually attended to." The

clerk bowed and retired. "And now, Monsieur Van Laret," said the inquisitor, "I will be candid and open with you. You are, by your own confession, in a situation of extreme peril, and, according to the letter of the law, even your being a strict Catholic would avail you but little, if the prosecution were once commenced. You know the Counts Egmont and Horn have recently suffered on the scaffold, professing the true Catholic faith, from which they seem never to have swerved. Their crime was precisely similar to your's—abetting heretics; but it never could be proved so clearly as in your case. However, I am always disposed to lean to the side of mercy; and, if you really are a staunch Catholic, and have been deceived by these artful heretics, you shall be allowed an opportunity of proving it before any further steps are taken, on these conditions. You represent yourself to be a

person of respectability and substance, and I must tell you, candidly, that such is the representation of nine-tenths of the people brought before us, who afterwards turn out to be little better than vagabonds and refugees. Now, from your appearance and manners, I feel inclined to judge very differently of you; but, in the exercise of our public duties, we know no distinctions of persons, and therefore I call upon you, officially, to prove the truth of your allegations, by placing in my hands the sum of a thousand florins, as a security for your appearance at a future time, should such appearance *happen* to be required. If your situation in life be really what you describe, you can find no difficulty in raising that sum in the town."

"A thousand florins!" exclaimed Van Laret; "your excellency surely will not require so *large* an amount."

"*Large*, you call it!" observed the inqui-

sitor, with a sneer. "Well—please yourself—I have no other remarks to offer."

"Really, I know not to whom to apply for such a sum immediately," said Van Laret.

"Indeed!" continued the counsellor, in a tone of irony; "I thought you were intimate with the bishop and his secretary, and a number of other rich and influential people in the town."

The miserable creature, thus caught in the snare prepared by his own words, after one or two more vain attempts to release himself on easier terms, was permitted to go into the town to endeavour to raise the sum in question. In this pursuit he succeeded almost beyond his most sanguine hopes. The bishop's secretary's deputy paid him a considerable sum, which would shortly afterwards have been due to him, on account of the expenses of the St. Antoine estate, and moreover, advanced an additional

hundred florins for friendship's sake ; but, in reality, because he knew that he should be able to deduct it from future accounts, and wished to keep on the best terms with the master of a convenient and hospitable mansion. The agent of Monsieur Andelot scrupled not also to pay all that was due for the orphans' board and lodging, and to add the quarter which would expire in the course of a few weeks. With these sums, and others of less amount, borrowed from his wine-merchant and lawyer, Van Laret repaired, agitated by a strange mixture of feeling, to the house of the inquisitor, cursing himself for having had any thing to do with informations.

He was now ushered into a small private room, where the master of the house soon waited upon him, and asked if he was prepared with the necessary security. The reply appeared to be perfectly satisfactory, and produced

something like an agreeable smile on the harsh and swarthy countenance of the Spaniard, who took the bags, one by one, as his visitor placed them on the table, and deposited them in an iron chest that stood on the floor, and which he then immediately closed, locked, and put the key in his pocket.

“Would it not be as well,” said Van Laret, who stood watching the process, twirling his broad hat awkwardly in his hands, “or perhaps better, if your excellency were to give me a memorandum of some kind, just to say that I had complied with the forms?”

“Pshaw!” replied the inquisitor, in a tone and manner which the hearer comprehended but too well; “we understand one another, I dare say. So I wish you good day, and am very happy to have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance.”

“The young ladies are gone out with some

gentlemen who came here about an hour ago," said the landlady of the inn, on Van Laret's appearance.

"Yes, I know it," was the reply. "Tell the ostler to let me have my horse directly."

"Well, I thought, from the time you came, that you couldn't have dined at home first," said the landlady; "and so I've got a nice dinner just ready for you, for I knew you'd be too late for the folks in town."

"Pshaw! I've no appetite," was the ungracious answer; "but come, give me a tumbler of your best wine, for I'm parched with thirst; but order my horse out, and, perhaps, if you've any thing good, I may pick a bit standing, but it won't do to sit down regularly, as I shall be late home."

It was long since Van Laret had made so scanty a meal; but, as he said, he had no appetite. When his horse was brought to the door,

he gave instructions that the other two, on which the young ladies came, should be sent back to Fort Santon by some careful person, as their riders were going to remain with some acquaintance in town.

"Pray, sir," whispered the ostler, in his ear, as he was about to go, "do you know *who* it was they went out with?"

"Not I," replied Van Laret, quietly; "some of their friends, I suppose; but I know very little about them or their connections."

"It was some of the people that are always about the Spanish inquisitor," said the ostler, in the same low tone, and looking cautiously round, lest any one might be within hearing.

"And why not?" asked the governor; "why shouldn't they have their friends as well as other people, I should like to know?"

But, for all his assumed *nonchalance*, he could not avoid feeling a momentary tinge of

remorse, at the idea of having delivered such a woman as Isabella, into the hands of relentless persecutors, without, in any degree, deriving benefit to himself from the transaction.

His usual remedy for lowness of spirits was at hand, and he called lustily for the stirrup-cup, which he emptied with greedy haste.

"Come, fill it again, dame," he cried, when in the saddle; "that's not the worst I ever took. And mind you send those horses over by some careful man this evening."

The hostess handed up the horn, expressed her satisfaction that her customer was pleased, and added, "I wish you could teach that young lady to take wine, sir; I'm sure it would do her good, for she looks very delicate, poor thing. But how very beautiful she is! and what a sweet girl the other is too! I don't know when I've seen any thing like either of 'em. And they're so good and mild spoken too—"

"There!" cried Van Laret, throwing down the horn. And a moment after his spurs were in his horse's sides, who sprang forward, and soon bore him beyond the reach of such unwelcome sounds.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Isabella was left at the inn, to await the return of Van Laret, she occupied herself by writing to inform her guardian of the motives which induced her to quit, for a short time, the retreat in which he had placed her. She likewise mentioned having signed a security for the payment of a sum of money, on account of a person in temporary difficulty, whom her father would, she was certain, have felt bound to assist, had he been living. The particulars, she stated, were too lengthy for a letter, but she trusted soon to have the pleasure of communicating them to him in person, when

she doubted not he would be satisfied with her conduct.

This letter was finished and directed, and left unsealed merely for the purpose of adding the address of her new lodgings; and Isabella, rallying her spirits, was endeavouring to amuse her young companion, when a waiter entered to inform her that two persons were below inquiring for her. She desired that they might be immediately shown into her room, doubting not but they were the friends of whom Van Laret had spoken, and that he himself had been detained longer than he expected, in the transaction of his legal business.

When they made their appearance, she could not avoid being struck by the extreme singularity of their demeanour. One, a man of most repulsive aspect, stood still and erect, a few paces from the door, eyeing her with a cold and lowering look which it was painful to endure.

The other, with an air of commiseration, mingled with forced politeness, advanced nearer, and made an awkward obeisance.

“I presume,” said Isabella, endeavouring to be at ease with her visitors, though little prepossessed in their favour, “I presume that we are indebted to Monsieur Van Laret, for the favour of this call?”

“Yes,” replied the man nearest to her with a grave look, “that is the name of the gentle man—the person who ——” and he hesitated.

“Aye, aye, that’s the name!” exclaimed the other, abruptly, “that’s the name, so it’s all right.”

Isabella now changed her opinion, and fancied that instead of being the governor’s friends, they must be persons who had lodgings to let, and whom he had therefore sent to wait upon her. Under this impression she stated the truth, and inquired of the man nearest to her,

if he had or knew of any apartments likely to suit them. He seemed to catch the idea with avidity, and replied in the affirmative.

"If you will allow me to conduct you *ma'am-selle*," he continued, "we shall not have far to go, and I think it very likely that you will find Monsieur Van Laret there to receive you. If not, he won't be long after you."

"Aye, aye, he's there, safe enough by this time," said the other.

"I won't go with that shocking looking man!" whispered Elinor.

"Hush! my dear," said Isabella; and then, turning to her visitor, she expressed her readiness to accompany him.

As they walked along the streets, Elinor clung to the arm of her friend, and shrank back whenever the object of her dislike came too near her; and that was frequently, for the men kept one on either side of their prisoners, and he

who had evinced some feelings of humanity was on that next Isabella, with whom he, every now and then, exchanged a word.

"How the people do stare at us!" exclaimed Elinor, "I never saw any thing so rude in my life!"

"Perhaps it is because we are strangers," said Isabella, who could not avoid being struck with the notice which they appeared to excite, but for which she found it impossible satisfactorily to account; and, in endeavouring so to do, she was startled to find that the long dormant consciousness of personal beauty was awakened within her. Such vain feelings she deemed to have passed away, and heaved a sigh at her own weakness, now but too evident in permitting their momentary return.

"Will this *never* end!" exclaimed a venerable looking man, whose eye had been for some time fixed upon her, with an expres-

sion of deep feeling. Isabella started at the exclamation.

“Do pray look!” cried Elinor, “look behind! There’s a crowd of people following us! I’m quite frightened!”

Her friend looked and felt likewise alarmed. “What can be the meaning of this?” she asked the man who still kept close at her elbow.

“Oh! nothing, nothing, ma’amselle,” was the reply. “Don’t take any notice of them; we shall soon be out of their way.”

“Let us walk quicker,” said Isabella; and they hurried forward till they reached the place of their destination.

It was a large and gloomy building, and, as they ascended the stairs, the yet unsuspecting prisoner remarked, “you appear to have plenty of room here; but I fear the situation is somewhat close and confined.”

“Yes, it is somewhat close,” said the unfeel-

ing wretch, who had fallen back and followed them closely. The savage jeering tone in which he uttered these words, aroused, for the first time, Isabella's suspicions respecting the character of her companions, and she hesitated to proceed.

"Go on!" exclaimed the man behind, rudely pushing Elinor. The child sprang up two steps to get beyond his reach.

"You had better just look at the apartments now you are here," said the other man, "perhaps you will find them better than you expect."

"I am so fond of plenty of air," replied Isabella, as coolly as possible, "that the closeness of a situation is, to me, an insurmountable objection."

"That's a pity!" observed the wretch below, in the same tone as before. Isabella reflected for a moment that, into whatever hands they had fallen, they were now completely in their power; and then, relying on the speedy arrival

of Van Laret, who, from the notice they had attracted in coming, could have no difficulty in tracing them to the house, she assented to the proposal of looking at the apartments, and continued to ascend the stairs, till they came to the third story. Her guide then knocked gently three times at a massy door, which seemed the entrance to a suite of rooms. The flap of a little grating in the centre was first opened, and, a moment after, the huge door itself was flung back, and exhibited a small vestibule, lighted only by a lamp, which scarcely shed sufficient light to render the porter's chair visible. The moment they had entered, the outer door was closed, and the porter, without speaking, proceeded to unlock and open another of the same description; and then, the daylight, entering from a long gallery beyond, enabled them to see that the apartment in which they stood was hung round with arms.

"Where have you brought us?" exclaimed Isabella.

"Only a few steps farther," said her guide.

"Don't be alarmed—arms are necessary in these times—the proprietor of the house is a military man." And then, for the first time, taking her by the arm, he gently, but firmly forced her onward a few steps, while his companion pushed Elinor beyond the reach of the second door, which was instantly closed behind them.

Resistance was now useless, and they submitted to be conducted into a small apartment which seemed to be a waiting-room; and there the men left them, with a promise of sending the housekeeper immediately "to show the apartments."

In a few minutes, a tall athletic woman made her appearance, with a huge bunch of keys suspended to her girdle, and invited them civilly

to accompany her. She then led the way, through several passages, till they came to a door, formed like many others they had passed, and, when that was opened, another appeared behind, through which they entered into a chamber, sparsely fitted up, and furnished with two beds.

"This is to be your apartment, ladies," said the woman.

"For mercy's sake!" exclaimed Isabella, "tell me where we are!"

"Oh, you are very safe," replied the woman, "but it's no part of my business to answer questions. I dare say you'll find all you want; but, if not, I shall come again by and by." And with these words, she left the room, and locked both doors upon the prisoners.

The die seemed now cast; but still hope, which seldom, if ever, departs from the human breast, whispered to Isabella that she might be

one among many females who had sought refuge from the consequences of civil war, and that the establishment she was in might have been provided purposely for their safety. The use of Van Laret's name contributed greatly to this delusion, for she yet considered him their friend and protector. That he could have acted the part of an informer against them, was, of course, an idea which never suggested itself to her imagination; and she resolved patiently to wait his arrival.

It was well for her, at this time of sudden change, that she had a companion, who prevented her mind from preying on itself. The poor child sat weeping and wringing her hands, exclaiming that she was sure they were in a prison, and pointed out the strong iron bars, by which the windows were screened, in proof of her assertion.

Hour after hour passed slowly away, and still

Van Laret did not make his appearance ; but it was not till the shades of evening darkened all around that Isabella really believed she was a prisoner, and then she sought in vain for the cause of her confinement. . Even after her poor father's death they had been allowed to live openly and unquestioned at Valenciennes ; and, since that period, the seclusion in which she had lived prevented her from committing any breach of the laws. No one who knew her situation could suspect her of having attended the reformists' forbidden meetings, and she was conscious of having never expressed her religious sentiments to any one.

The unparalleled bloodthirstiness of the Duke of Alva and his myrmidons was not then known to her in its full extent ; yet she knew enough of the sanguinary measures of former governments to convince her that imprisonment, on a charge of heresy, was the too probable harbinger of death.

Isabella was, naturally, of a high and lofty spirit; but it had been chastened, and bowed down by the iron hand of adversity. The idea of terminating her own existence in the same way as her father, and, too probably, others who were dear to her had done, was not new to her. In silence and solitude she had frequently brooded over the gloomy prospect, and endeavoured to trace out a path of action for herself when the hour of trial should arrive. Her youthful companion had now cried herself to sleep, and all around was shrouded in darkness. To prepare for the worst, she bent humbly down before Him "who seeth in secret, and giveth strength to the feeble," and implored him to support her through approaching trials, even unto the hour of extremity.

When she arose, her spirit seemed to have awakened refreshed within her, as from a long and torpid sleep. It is often thus with strong

minds, when, after being long tied and bound by adverse circumstances, a cause at length appears requiring all their conscious energies. It is thus with man, when long repressed in his bold aspirings by "the proud man's contumely, the insolence of office," and all "that patient merit from the unworthy takes"—when, to equal observers, he seems weary of fruitless attempts—an inert and hopeless creature—then, if the door be thrown suddenly back, and the path of ambition open to his view, a new spirit appears to be born within him, and he rushes onward to the astonishment of those who measured him not aright because he belonged not to their standard. It is often thus with woman, patient and enduring woman, when, thrown upon her own resources, with none to look to for protection or assistance—then the noble resolution of proving herself worthy pervades every thought, word and action.

The reader must have but a small circle of acquaintance if unable to call to mind one instance of some retiring female, apparently all unfitted to take her place in this bustling and unfeeling world, who has become a new creature when, bereaved of him on whom, in her weakness, she leaned for support, she has been left a widow with a family. She has then proved *worthy* of her trust. The welfare of her children has been the goal and boundary of her ambition; and nothing is left undone for the attainment of that one great end. What seemed deficient and almost impossible before, is attempted and accomplished; and heroes, if they could judge aright, might envy such a woman when her maternal efforts have been crowned with success.

Eager desire to merit the love of one belongs to an earlier period of life, ere years and multiplied duties have blunted the keenness of feel-

ing, and divided the once concentrated affections ; and its strength is in proportion with that concentration and the unchecked outpourings of the heart. If he, to whom her thoughts were ever wandering, had gone before, Isabella felt that he must have trod the thorny path with unshrinking step and undaunted mind ; and even thus she was resolved to follow. And, if he were still on earth, he should have no cause to blush for her whom he had chosen.

Such were her resolutions, such were the thoughts that *would* gain the ascendant in her mind, though she endeavoured to convince herself that they were but of a secondary nature, and that her motive for self-abandonment was purely a religious feeling, a firm conviction that it was her duty to sacrifice life itself, rather than deny the truth.

Such was her state of mind, when the unlocking of the outer door of her chamber fell

upon her ear, and, shortly after, that in the inside was thrown back, and two men, bearing lamps, appeared in the passage, while one advanced slowly towards her.

"Isabella Freron," said he, in a low voice, "your presence is desired to answer certain questions."

"Lead on," she instantly replied, in a whisper, fearing to awaken poor Elinor, who, at the moment uttered a deep sigh, and appeared restless. The man instantly withdrew; she followed him, and the doors were again closed and locked.

The apartment to which she was then conducted, was under the same roof, and she found herself in the presence of the Spanish member of the Council of Tumults, whose interviews with Van Laret have been already related. He was sitting at the centre of a long table, at each end of which was a secretary,

with writing materials before him. A large chandelier hung suspended from the roof, throwing a strong light between the inquisitor and the prisoner, who was placed opposite to him. He seemed struck with her appearance, and desired one of the men to hand the young lady a chair; after obeying which command, her conductors retired, and left her with the persons in office.

"You must be aware, Mademoiselle," said the counsellor, "why you are brought here."

"I can only guess," replied Isabella, faintly.

"Well—and what do you guess?" asked the Spaniard.

"I imagine that I must be suspected of having infringed some of the laws respecting religion," she replied, "but, as far as I know them, I can confidently affirm that I have not."

There was still, in spite of her previous resolutions, a quivering of the lips, and a nervous

trepidation throughout her whole frame, which gradually forsook her as the examination proceeded.

"I am willing to believe it," said the Spaniard "and that token," looking at the cross which she then wore, for reasons similar to those mentioned in her former journey, "that emblem about your neck is seldom carried by heretics. Do not be alarmed. Answer me directly and truly, and you have nothing to fear. Have you ever attended any meetings of the reformers?"

"I have," replied Isabella, "but it was long ago—not since the death of my dear father."

"Your father!" exclaimed the inquisitor; and then, opening a large folio that lay before him, he remained, for about a minute, silently engaged in searching out the name in its pages.

"Oh, yes, I see," he then continued, "Fregon—it was at Valenciennes; there is *only* one

of that name. Well—you were then young, and probably would not have gone of your own accord?"

"Probably not," said Isabella, with a sigh.

"Where have you lived since?" inquired the Spaniard. The prisoner informed him where she had been placed by her guardian.

"Your guardian!" exclaimed the counsellor. "Then you have property! I thought—What effects of yours has he in charge?"

"I know nothing of such matters," she replied; "but I understood we had something left. I hope we are not a burden on the generosity of Monsieur Andelot."

"You are of age?"

"The day before yesterday," was the answer.

"Who is the clergyman of your parish?" asked the Spaniard.

"His name is Winkelman," said Isabella.

"Can he answer for your principles, and your regular attendance at mass and confession?"

"I have never spoken to him," she replied.

"How!" exclaimed the inquisitor, sternly, "and yet you have resided a year in his parish!"

"Tis even so," said Isabella, calmly; and as she perceived the storm rising, she felt her courage likewise rising to meet it.

"How often during the year have you been to mass?" was the next question; and the reply was, "not once." And then the same answer was given respecting confessions.

"Such pastors are the curse of the church," observed the Spaniard. "But you—you knew your duty—you must have some notion of religion, notwithstanding your unhappy parentage. What have you to plead in excuse for the neglect of your duties?"

"I am not sensible of having neglected any that were within my reach," said the prisoner.

"What!" cried the incensed counsellor, "do you not reckon attendance at mass and confession among your duties?"

"I confess my sins to Him who alone hath power to forgive," replied Isabella, solemnly.

"Marvellous assurance!" exclaimed the Spaniard; "and you dare to insinuate that the church has not that power?"

"I believe that no inferior being, none but He, against whom we have sinned, can forgive us our trespasses," she replied.

"Then I suppose you doubt the real presence of the body of our blessed Saviour in the celebration of the holy sacrament?" demanded the inquisitor, fiercely.

"As I am thankful to my creator for the use of my reason and my senses," said Isabella, "I

cannot believe that which those faculties convince me is false and impossible."

"Really—you are quite heroic," observed the Spaniard, with a cruel sneer. "We shall see, however, whether this will last." And he stamped three times on the floor.

"Take this *lady* away," said he to the men who immediately made their appearance, "and bring the young one here. But let them be kept apart."

Isabella entreated that they might not be separated, but, of course, without success; and she was conveyed to another apartment.

Poor Elinor was shortly afterwards brought up for examination. She awoke soon after Isabella's departure, and was dreadfully alarmed at finding herself in darkness and alone, in a strange place, where her cries were unavailing; and she ran round the room, feeling upon the chairs and the beds and in every corner, hoping

that Isabella was asleep, and then fearing that she had fallen down in a fit. In this state of agitation she was found by the men, who pacified her somewhat by saying that they had come to take her to her friend, who was only gone into another room.

"Where is Isabella?" she cried, on entering the inquisitor's apartment, and seeing only him and his two secretaries.

"Sit down, my dear," said he, in a tone of affected kindness, "she will be here presently."

"They told me she was here," said Elinor, "I can't think why she didn't wake me, and take me with her."

"I'll tell you how it is, my dear," continued the inquisitor, in the same strain, "I have been having a little conversation about you, and she said that, though you were so young, you knew the difference between the true and the false

religion; and I told her I didn't think you would be able to answer any questions, unless she was by to help you; but she said you would, and so she has just stepped into another room to try you."

"Well, but *why* should you want to ask me about such things?" inquired Elinor, "you know men and women that are grown up can't agree about them, and are always quarrelling. I think there's some trick in it, and so I shan't answer any questions."

"Very well," said the Spaniard, "do just as you like, only mind this, if you don't, you will not see your friend again, and must sleep in a room by yourself till you do. That's our agreement."

Elinor bit her lips with vexation, and appeared resolved to be stubborn.

"So then, you won't or you can't, which is it?" asked the inquisitor; "however, at all

events, you must be taken back and kept in your room, till you are a good girl," and stamping on the floor, he recalled her conductors. "Here," he continued, "take this naughty girl back to her room, and mind that she has no candle nor supper to-night; and then you may tell Mademoiselle Freron that she needn't wait any longer, but may come in as soon as she pleases."

The men, with very little ceremony, took hold of poor Elinor, and were about to drag her away ere she relented, and then, upon receiving an assurance that she should afterwards see her dear friend, she consented to answer the questions. The men were then ordered to leave her, and retire.

"Well, my dear, now you are a good girl," resumed the Spaniard, "I won't trouble you with many questions. Tell me which you think is the true religion?"

"To love God with all our might, and all our soul, and all our strength, and to do unto others as we would they should do unto us," replied Elinor.

"Very well," said the inquisitor, "but then how must we show that we love God?"

"By keeping his commandments," was the child's answer, "and saying our prayers and begging him to forgive us our sins."

"But can nobody else forgive us our sins except God?" asked her examiner.

"No, to be sure not!" exclaimed Elinor, "and what would it signify if they did? Suppose anybody had offended you, what would be the use of *my* forgiving him? that's nonsense! and you only asked to try me, I know."

"I see you have been properly taught," observed the inquisitor, with a sneer, "what do you think of the Catholic religion?"

“Do you mean the Roman Catholic religion? the Popish religion?”

“Yes, the same.”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” continued Elinor, “Isabella and Ernest both say that there are a great many good people belonging to that religion, and they know best; but I’m *sure* there are a great many wicked people, because they kill those who can’t think the same as themselves—now that, you know, is not doing as they would be done by.”

“Pray, do you ever go to hear mass?” asked the Spaniard.

“No, not for a long while,” said Elinor, “and I never mean to go any more, because I don’t think its any better than idolatry; for, as Ernest says, there’s very little difference between the heathen who cut their god out of a block of wood, and then worship it, and those that take a bit of——”

"Silence! you little reptile!" shouted the enraged persecutor, stamping violently on the floor. "Ho, there! Take away this young blasphemer!"

"Where is Isabella? where is Isabella? You promised that I should see her!" cried poor Elinor, struggling vainly to release herself from the grasp of her bearers, who literally carried her away, and thrust her into the lonely chamber.

"We must look well after this Ernest," said the inquisitor, to his secretaries. "Let a reward of two hundred florins be immediately offered for his apprehension. And write a few lines to that priest, to say that I wish to speak to him on particular business, the first time he can make it convenient to come over. Twelvemonths within his parish! and resident, too, in the house of its principal inhabitant, whom, I understand, he often visits! and yet he has never

spoken to them! The thing is hardly credible! And yet, if he has, the matter is still worse, as they appear little inclined to hide their damnable errors. We must sift this business thoroughly to the bottom."

We shall leave the mental sufferings of the two solitary prisoners to the imagination of the reader, merely observing that Isabella, having now, as she conceived, entered upon the course of martyrdom, resolved to endure all unto the end, with a martyr's fortitude.

That it may not be necessary to recur to the circumstance, it will be as well to state here, that, in due course, the Rev. Pius Winkelman called upon the member of council, and exonerated himself, in the best way he was able, for the neglect of his official duties. The fact was, that he had seen Isabella many times, but *always* at a distance; and she, for obvious reasons, constantly endeavoured to avoid him.

This he had observed, and, coupling it with Van Laret's silence respecting her, and her non-appearance at his table, the good easy man had come to a conclusion that she formed a feature of the governor's establishment, which it was much better for him to know nothing about. And, as the church of Rome was then far from illiberal to its followers, in such particulars, he hesitated not to say something of the kind to the inquisitor, who observed, "Well, that's likely enough, after all; for she's a brazen-faced hussey, and handsome enough too. But what have you to say to the other little vixen, and the brother, who seems to have been her instructor?" "He is an idiot," replied Winkelman; "and as for the child, who, I understood, was a *mere* child, as I concluded the governor must be her father, I conceived she was safe in his hands, for the present, as I have every reason to believe him a good Catholic, and a faithful subject of his Majesty."

And thus, with an official hint that great watchfulness was expected from the clergy at the present crisis, terminated Winkelman's examination.

The reason that Van Laret had forbore to mention the exact situation of the orphans to his pastor, was the fear of their coming into collision, which, he clearly saw must hasten the present catastrophe, and deprive him of his anticipated harvest, when Isabella should be of age.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES RANDOLPH, mounted on his fiery charger, captain of a troop, and surrounded by twenty thousand companions in arms, experienced all the chivalrous delirium of a young warrior. Few heroes would have stood higher in the annals of military prowess, could he have performed half the exploits that occupied his daily and nightly dreams. He was to be alone in the breach, foremost in the charge, hemmed in, with a chosen few, among the thickest of the enemy, and cutting his way through, in spite of all opposition, bearing down their leaders and capturing their standards. All that he had ever heard or read of ancient and modern

heroism appeared as incentives, examples, or rather scenes, to be reacted in his present career. Mighty and glorious, however, as was the undertaking of his country's release from tyranny, the little fort of St. Antoine was ever the most prominent feature in the sketches of his ardent imagination, although he had no reason to suppose that any of its inmates were not in the full enjoyment of peace and liberty.

The army, after crossing the Rhine a little above Cologne, advanced towards Aix-la-Chapelle. There it was understood that the Duke of Alva had arrived at Maestricht; and the Prince of Orange immediately decided to march in the direction of Liege, which he fully anticipated would declare in his favour. Had Charles planned the route expressly, it could not have accorded better with his designs, for he soon found himself within the boundaries of the forest of Ardennes. There some delay

arose; the citizens of Liege were overawed by the power and success of their rulers, and the place and citadels were too strong to admit of open attack. In the meanwhile, foraging parties were out in all directions, and, in the first of these excursions, Charles visited the little inn where he had found such welcome accommodation, when making his escape from Maestricht. The landlord appeared delighted to see the "mad captain" again, and congratulated his master on the improved condition of the beast.

"He shan't go away empty, you may rely upon it, sir, nor more shall you or your men," he continued, "for I wish success to the good cause, and will do all I can to serve you; and let me tell you that's something, at all events, in the way of foraging, for there's not a rick, nor a stack, nor a barn in the forest that I don't know as well as my own little homestead."

This was, on all accounts, pleasant intelli

gence to the young captain, who inquired if he knew the castle of St. Antoine.

"St. Antoine ! St. Antoine ! no—" said the ranger, doubtfully ; "oh—yes—you mean Fort Santon, where one Van Laret, as they call him, lives."

"The same—is it far off?" asked Charles.

"Why, yes, it must be about ten or twelve miles from here," was the reply ; "but this is a good deal out of the way from where you came. You should have kept nearer to the river and then you'd have had little more than that distance to ride altogether."

"Can you conduct me there to-morrow?" said the captain.

"Why, for the matter of that, of course I can," answered the landlord, smiling ; "that is, if you *compel* me, and show you a nearer road too than you'll find otherwise, pretty near all over the turf."

"Well then," said Charles, "I believe I *must* compel you: for I understand there is plenty of forage in that direction."

"No doubt, no doubt," observed the ranger; "if not there's plenty at Fort Santon, where the governor keeps lots of horses, and there was a man here, not half an hour ago, told me that the greater part of them, and their riders too, were gone over to Liege this morning with a Spanish officer, to strengthen the garrison at the citadel, in case your army should move forward to attack the place. But, bless my soul! here's another troop coming this way."

Charles looked and discerned immediately that it was a party of his own regiment, with his friend and commanding officer, now Colonel Houlon.

"Well, Randolph! How do you go on?" was the first salutation. "As we've no enemy near, I thought I'd just have a gallop across the forest to keep the horses in wind."

The young captain gave a most satisfactory account of his success, and offered to supply the party just arrived with as much hay and corn as they could carry from the spot. He then informed his colonel of the way in which he became acquainted with the place and his host, and ventured to hint at an excursion to the castle.

Colonel Houlon well knew his motive, as they had often talked of the place and its inhabitants; but he had some doubts respecting the real character of the owner, whether he occupied the castle as a private gentleman, or on account of the government. He therefore questioned the landlord, whose reply, relative to the armed party which had marched from thence to Liege that morning, gave him evident satisfaction.

"You know the castle well?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the ranger, "and every nook about it. Many a buck have I helped to

carry there in my father's time, when the old count used to live there."

"Are there any arms there?" said the colonel.

"There was a great room full once, of all sorts," replied the ranger; "and I dare say that they are there now, for I am told this Van Laret is only put in by the government, to take care of the place till the young count returns, though he takes as much upon himself as if it was all his own."

"You must go with us," said Colonel Houlton.

"If I must, I must," answered the man, with a smile; "I was telling the captain that just now."

"Will *you* go? Shall we go?" exclaimed the delighted Charles.

"Yes, my dear fellow," replied the colonel, "and in one hour from this time. You shall

head your own troop, and I'll go as a volunteer. So call your men in, and let every horse have a good feed of corn—no hay, mind—for we shan't let the grass grow under our feet. Arms are worth taking any where—and if we should have a bit of a brush, so much the better—it will serve to bring our hands in.”

In a few minutes the steeds were neighing, and their riders were running with corn in every direction, and then all was quiet; and the colonel and Charles were lounging together in front of the little inn.

“I know your motive for wishing to visit this castle,” observed the former, “but I must not let you imagine that I consent merely to gratify that wish. The fact is, that a little stirring work, now and then, keeps the men in spirits; and, to tell you the truth, there are symptoms of insubordination among us, which are not at all to my mind. These Germans are as heavy

and dull as cart-horses, and eat and drink as much too. We shall get a few arms I expect, and even that will be doing something—and forage, of course, and then return, by the nearest road to our quarters, in the morning. The troop that came with me will go back presently with what you have collected here. As you take the command, I shall merely give you my advice. The place, it seems, is very strongly situated—therefore I would send on the ranger, who is well known, with two or three picked men, whom he will furnish with blouses like the peasantry—not too many to excite suspicion—let one of them take the mountebank's horse, and he'll tumble down in the gateway, as if he was shot—and the troop may ride over him if you like—he won't stir till he gets the right sign. We shall get there, I calculate, about half an hour before sun-set, and then wait till the moon's up—but, however, just take your own

way—I merely suggest, and tell you what means are in your power.”

Charles thanked his adviser, but felt that he should rather have a little more danger, a somewhat more of “dash,” mixed up with the affair: yet, as stone walls and draw-bridges were awkward things to charge at with cavalry swords and pistols, he knew the counsel was good, and resolved to pursue it.

The hour soon elapsed, and away went the gallant troop, trotting briskly, and occasionally cantering along the greensward amid beautiful and wild forest scenery, which they had neither time nor inclination to admire. When within somewhat less than a mile of their destination, Charles halted his men, in order to put his, or rather the colonel's, device into execution.

“Directly we turn that corner,” said the guide, “we face the entrance, and then just take a sweep to the left, and begin to mount the hill.”

"Holla! there—Holla! Fido!" shouted a serjeant.

"What's that cursed noise about?" cried the colonel. "Do you think you're hunting?"

"Look, sir," exclaimed the shouter; "the captain's great dog is gone forward and he's worrying a man and a horse. See! he's leapt clean upon the horse's back! And now—look! the man's off! God bless me! what a tumble! But he's holding on fast to him still! Shall I go and part them, sir?"

"Hold!" cried the colonel, whose habit of command had made him forget he was merely a volunteer. "Is the place where the man lies within sight of the castle?" The ranger looked and decided it was not.

"Then do as you like—but I ask your pardon, Captain Randolph,"

"Pray give the necessary orders, colonel," said Charles, who saw the man's danger. "The

dog will not obey any one but me:" and he dashed forward, not without some suspicions of the truth, as Fido had never before been guilty of wantonly attacking any one. His usual tones of command seemed now to have lost their influence over the enraged animal, and he was compelled to dismount ere he could separate him from his victim, for they could no longer be termed combatants, as the man had ceased to struggle, and lay gasping and bleeding with looks of the wildest dismay.

"I fear you are much hurt," said Charles, unable to check his feelings of compassion at the wretched object before him.

"Where am I? Who are you?" groaned the man. "Take away that devil! his eyes are glaring at me now!—they are all on fire!"

Any one who had seen Fido at that moment, would have said that there was little exaggeration in the description, for every hair on his

body seemed bristling with rage, and he was scarcely restrained by all his master's strength.

"The men are dressing, and will pass by here to receive farther orders," said the colonel, as he rode up, "but this is sad work! your dog must be shot or kept close. The poor fellow seems terribly mauled."

"It is the governor of the castle," whispered Charles in his ear, "you know the story."

"Does he know you?" asked the veteran.

"No," was the reply.

"Good," said the colonel; "the men will be here presently—and I think—aye—that will do better still. Shall I alter your plan?"

"Do just as you like," answered Charles.

"Here!" cried the colonel, addressing the ranger, who now approached, "Do you know this gentleman?"

"Yes, sir, it is the governor of Fort Santon."

"I could have sworn it!" exclaimed Charles.

"Hush!" said the colonel, aside; and then turning to the ranger and his companions, he desired them to take the poor gentleman up and carry him to the castle. A hurdle was speedily procured, and Van Laret placed upon it. He recognised the ranger, and asked how long he had been lying on the ground.

"Not above a minute or two," was the reply.

"It seemed a long while," said Van Laret, faintly, "and I've been hunted through the forest by devils, leaping upon my back and over my shoulders—and I saw an army of men too under the trees—I'll swear I saw them—there—" and he pointed to the spot where the troops had been, but from whence the colonel had ordered them to retire behind the hill.

"Your fall stunned you, I suppose," said the ranger, "and then people frequently fancy odd things."

"Well, perhaps it might be so," murmured

Van Laret, "I'm very faint. Carry me home gently, good people."

The men then proceeded with their burden, but had scarcely reached a third of the ascent, when they were met by Van Laret's four remaining followers, coming down in search of their master, whose horse had thrown the household into alarm by galloping home furiously without a rider. In the meanwhile the colonel had posted himself on an elevated spot by the hill side, whence he had a full command of all that passed, and could give the preconcerted signal of advance to Charles and his troop in the valley below.

He watched the slow ascent, and saw the burden change hands several times between his own men and those of Van Laret; and at length it was borne through the castle gates by the latter, while the ranger and disguised soldiers followed, apparently unquestioned, and

the mountebank's horse fell in the entrance. His handkerchief was instantly waved, and Charles simultaneously shouted "Forward!" and came sweeping by with his troop at such a rate that the veteran had scarcely time to mount and overtake him ere they were entering the castle.

It was well that they were thus prompt in their movements, for a struggle had already commenced within, and the drawbridge was partly raised. On the road homeward Van Laret had partially recovered from his stupor, and having then no doubt of the identity of the animal that attacked him, he concluded that some of the insurgents must be near, and that he had really seen what, for a moment, he had ascribed to the effects of his fall. He was therefore no sooner within the gates than he gave orders that they should be closed and the drawbridges raised. The fallen horse rendered the

first command impracticable, and the execution of the second was a matter of contest between parties very equally matched, when the arrival of the troop set the question at rest.

Charles's first inquiry was, of course, for Isabella, who, he was informed, had left the castle that morning for Liege, where she purposed to stay a week or two. He was shown her apartments, and found, on the table, an unsealed note to her brother. This he took the liberty of opening, and found that the information he had received was correct. Bitter as his disappointment was, this circumstance afforded some alleviation, as Van Laret could furnish him with her address; and, in common with his associates, he anticipated that Liege would soon be in their possession.

"Now, my lads," said the colonel to his men, after placing the sentinels at their posts, "you've nothing to do, but take good care of your

horses; and then the captain and I will take good care of you. Come this way, Nick! you and your horse did that trick well. Dismount, will you—that's right. Now tumble up again a corporal, and remember, corporal Nick, to bring the other three blouses to my quarters to-morrow at noon. There—away with you all, and mind the nags—there's a shoe loose somewhere among you."

That was a jovial night for the troopers, who feasted to their hearts' content, and highly approved of the beer, the preparations for which had brought poor Mrs. Bhlum into difficulty.

Charles had an interview with Van Laret, who assured him that it was utterly out of his power to give Isabella's address, as he had left her at an inn, where she would remain till she could find lodgings to her mind. The lover was, therefore, obliged to be content with noting down the name of the inn, from which it

would scarcely be difficult to trace her. He then repaired to the apartments which she had so recently inhabited, to indulge himself in such fancies as need no description, if the reader has ever been in love, and which might seem exceedingly ridiculous to those who have never felt the "tender passion," if any such there be.

He had not been long in the enjoyment of his solitude, when a very pretty "country-looking" young woman, who had been in the habit of waiting on Isabella, made her appearance, and modestly inquired if he was particularly acquainted with Mademoiselle Freron. The question was promptly answered, and soon led to a most interesting conversation. Charles had a thousand questions to ask, and the girl seemed delighted to talk of her good young mistress, of whose goodness and kindness she spake in terms which made the captain think

her one of the most sensible and prettiest girls he had ever seen. She, with true feminine instinct, soon guessed the real nature of his acquaintance with Isabella, and informed him, that if he had any thing to communicate, she had orders to send over a box of clothes, in the morning, to Liege.

"My dear girl!" cried the enraptured lover, starting up, "you are positively an angel;" and in the height of his ecstasy, scarcely knowing what he did, he imprinted a kiss on her laughing lips. At this moment, the colonel opened the door, and finding his brother officer so pleasantly engaged, said he should go and have a *tête-a-tête* with the governor.

"Humph!" he muttered, walking along the passage. "My young friend is consoling himself for his disappointment in a proper, soldier-like way. So much the better! I shall deal better with the old scoundrel by myself—not a

grain of pity will I show the villain—he shall refund—aye to the last stiver.”

He found Van Laret sitting in a large arm-chair, with Momper in attendance.

“Well, governor! how do you find yourself now?” inquired the colonel, throwing himself into an arm-chair never before occupied by so unwelcome a guest.

“I should be better,” replied Van Laret, “if you would let this worthy man, who is my steward, just step up to my chamber to fetch a bottle of cordial which I am in the habit of taking; but your sentinels at the door will not suffer him to pass.”

“To be sure not,” replied the colonel, “but, however, you shan’t want your bottle. So come along, old gentleman!” he cried to Momper, “come along, ! and I’ll pass you safe enough.”

Van Laret gave a significant glance to the steward as he turned to go, and which the

colonel, to use his own expression, "put in his pocket."

"How could you be so unfeeling as not to let the poor gentleman fetch his bottle of medicine?" he cried in a loud and angry tone to one of the sentinels; and then, in a whisper, as Momper took the lead, he continued, "Cut down any man that attempts to pass in or out."

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Momper, as he began to mount the stairs, and found himself followed by his releaser, "I can easily find the bottle, and shan't be a moment."

"No trouble in the world, my worthy old friend," replied the colonel, "I've just taken a fancy to see how the governor lodges. Upon my word, you've everything very neat and tidy here."

When they had entered the chamber, he began to whistle a light air, and walk carelessly round, as if looking at the pictures and

furniture, but, in reality closely observing the motions of the steward, who seemed to be vainly searching for the bottle, in a sort of cellaret among others, and at length muttered, in a tone which he meant to express no particular anxiety, "I can't think where he has put it! It used to be here—but—*perhaps*—he *may* have put it into one of these drawers. I know he does shove anything that's of no value there sometimes to be out of his way. Bless me, how it sticks! those old drawers are never good for anything!" and he pretended to be pulling violently, at the same time that he adroitly introduced a key and turned the lock.

"Shall I help you?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, no—thank you," said Momper, "I can easily feel if it's here," and he thrust his hand into the half-open drawer.

"Stop a moment!" cried the colonel, stepping forward, "two are always better than

one at a search; and, besides, there's nothing like seeing what one's doing;" and he pulled forward the drawer to its full extent. "Ah," he continued, "its very likely to be among this rubbish. Your Spanish dollars are no bad medicine. I've known them cure many a complaint."

Momper now changed his tone, and expressed his hope that the colonel would not think of taking the money, particularly as it did not belong to his master, but was to be paid into the bishop's exchequer.

"That's lucky," observed the veteran, coolly, "for the bishop acts, in this affair, for some one else, I understand. I shall do myself the pleasure of calling upon him in a day or two. But I don't see any gold here! I want some good large yellow pictures of his popish Spanish majesty."

"We have nothing of the kind," said the steward, "I assure you."

"We'll just try these other keys," continued the colonel; "they seem well made."

"As you please," replied Momper, quietly, for he knew nothing of any other money in the house, being, as the reader will perhaps recollect, ignorant of the robbery of Snell. The keys opened a desk containing various papers and letters, "of no value to any one but the owner," and the remaining drawers, in which nothing of consequence appeared, save a common looking leathern belt, that had been ripped open. This the colonel closely examined, and found the print and sizes of its former contents indented clearly by long wear and pressure.

"Whose may this be?" he asked.

"I suppose it belongs to the governor," replied Momper, "but I don't recollect ever seeing it before—and yet——" and he hesitated, for it struck him, at the moment, to be exactly like that formerly worn by the prisoner, and

which he had frequently noticed on account of the singular manner in which it was sewn together.

"Now," continued the colonel, sternly, "I know all about that affair. So, tell me, at once, what hand you had in it?"

"I really don't know what you mean," said the astonished steward; "all I can say is, that that belt is very much like one worn by a prisoner we had here, who made his escape. And all that I had to do in the affair was to get myself out of difficulty on that account, except that I did what I could to keep him safe, as it was my duty to do."

The colonel kept his eye fixed upon the speaker, and felt convinced that he was not prevaricating. Dropping all further examination, he therefore locked the drawers, and proceeded forthwith, accompanied by Momper, to the kitchen, where he desired him to perform

the duties of his office, by seeing that every accommodation was afforded to the soldiers. Then, giving orders to a trusty serjeant not to let the old man go out of his sight, he repaired again to the great hall, to have a little conversation with the governor, whom he found extremely uneasy at the long absence of his steward, for whom he inquired immediately.

"He's very safe, attending to his duty," said the colonel. "And now, Van Laret, I've a very few words to say to you. You're an old soldier, I suppose, and so am I, so we understand each other's way of speaking. If I served you as you deserve, I should just take you back with me, and have you hanged at head quarters."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the governor: "you have come upon me by surprise, and got possession of the castle. What then? If I had you outside the walls, I'd soon show you whether I understood my duty or not."

But you are in; and, under all circumstances, I defy you to say there's any stain on my honour."

"Honour! you infernal cowardly assassin!" cried the enraged colonel: "*you talk of honour!* Look at *that!*" and he produced the belt.

Van Laret looked, and changed colour, and for a few seconds remained silent; but then, determined to hold out till the last, he muttered, "Well—and what of that?"

"Just thus much," observed the colonel, in the cool measured tone, more indicative than any other, of a determined purpose, "that I will have the *whole* of the gold pieces taken from this belt replaced within it—or take the consequences."

"It is impossible!" exclaimed Van Laret.

"It *shall* be done!" said Colonel Houlon.

"They are spent and gone!" cried the governor.

"So much the worse for you," continued the colonel, in the same tone as before; "but I don't believe it. Fellows like you hoard up gold, and never change a piece as long as they've silver, and you've always had plenty of that. Will you go and fetch it?"

"I've told you already that it's gone," said Van Laret, doggedly.

"Then you won't!" exclaimed the colonel. "Holloa, there! sentinel! go and bring Captain Randolph's Fido here! and tell any of the fellows that have a mind for a bit of sport, to come along with him, and they shall see some fun."

"You wouldn't have the barbarity!" cried Van Laret, turning pale: "here I am scarcely able to move a limb from the effects of the fall. You *cannot* have the barbarity—"

"By Him that made me, I will!" said the colonel. "Brute to brute is fair play,—and I'll warrant he shall shake the truth out of you."

The governor leaned his head upon his hand, but continued to preserve a sullen silence, in hopes, perhaps, that his tormentor would relent. Then there was heard a noise in the passage, and in rushed a party of soldiers, eager for the promised fun, and just sufficiently elevated, by the effects of their carouse, to be ripe for any sort of mischief.

“Free and easy’s the word, my lads!” cried the colonel. “This is the cowardly villain that shot poor young Snell, Captain Randolph’s friend, whom he decoyed, unarmed, into the woods just below here, under pretence of enabling him to escape. You have, some of you, heard the story before, at Munster, I dare say.” Here a murmur of indignation went round. “Well, my lads!” continued the colonel, “the black dog seems to have volunteered as champion; and, as he has already unhorsed his antagonist, I propose that he shall now go

through with the business; for hang me if I should like any of you to stain your hands with such carrion."

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted the men.

"Make your bets, my lads," said the veteran.

"Two to one on the dog! Three to one! Five to one! Ten to one! Twenty to one!" were offered, but all in vain, there were no takers.

"Fifty to one!" cried a private.

"Stop," said the newly-made corporal, who had formerly rode his mountebank horse in the capacity of a tumbler and clown, "I think I'll take that—that is, if I may be bold enough to ask the colonel if the match is to be against time."

"No, no," was the reply, "an assassin's case, *à l'outrance*; and if any one touches the dog, I'll forgive the man that pistols him?"

"Then I'll have nothing to do with it," said the corporal, "otherwise Laret's a tough chap,

and mightn't slip his wind for ten minutes or so—I remember him when he was under helper and dungcart man at the stables where our company put up at Brussels. He got turned away for selling hay on his own account in the way back."

"Here comes the dog!" shouted half a dozen of the spectators, and Fido was led in by two men, who appeared scarcely able to hold him, when he caught sight of Van Laret.

"I wouldn't take the fellow's place for his castle and his Van to boot!"

"Nor I!"

"Why, he's going to die dunghill! See how he shakes!"

"You'd shake, too, if you were he," said various voices.

"Well, are you ready?" asked the colonel, turning to Van Laret, who made no other reply than a deep groan, and then fell back in his

chair, utterly overcome by terror, conscious guilt, and the public exposure of his origin, which he had always endeavoured most studiously to conceal.

Fido now, as if disdaining to attack a fallen adversary, suffered himself to be led quietly out of the room; and, in a few minutes Van Laret was sufficiently recovered to be again sensible of his real situation. He had, however, scarcely time to look round, ere the relentless colonel called out for the dog to be brought in again.

"Stop! for mercy sake!" cried the poor wretch.

"Mercy is out of the question with *you*," said his persecutor. "Bring him in! and let him go at once! I wouldn't have the animal choked for fifty such rascals."

"I will do what I can," gasped Van Laret, "I believe I have some of the pieces—"

"I will have every one," said the colonel,

sternly, "and don't think to deceive me—the prints here are too plain—and, if there's one missing, you shall have a bout with the dog to-night, and if he doesn't finish his work the gallows shall."

He then explained the motives of his conduct to the soldiers, who retired to the kitchen better pleased than if "the sport" had really gone forward; as when, after the first excitement, they observed the helpless state of the governor, it seemed somewhat hard and "irregular" to "bring him to the scratch" without the smallest chance of his being able to make any effectual defence.

The colonel's suspicion was correct. The villain had hoarded the gold, as people are always wont in troublesome times, because it is easy to be concealed and not burdensome in carriage. As he was unable to stir, it was found, agreeable to his directions, in a crevice

of the wall, behind the tapestry in his sleeping room, the head of the bed being placed against the spot.

As soon as this important business was terminated, the colonel hastened to carry the pleasant intelligence to his young friend, whom he found writing a letter, or rather adding another sheet to that which he always carried about him. The captain, after expressing his delight and gratitude, began to make some apologies for his own neglect of duty.

"Tut, man," said the veteran, "I knew that you'd have business enough in hand when you got here, and that was one of my motives for coming. By the by, that was a pretty little girl you had here just now—eh! soon made matters up, captain. That's right, my boy! no use fretting—'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' as the saying goes—and a nice little bird it was, that I will say."

Charles was obliged to submit to the railery of the worthy veteran, who was now in that delightful state of exhilaration which commonly follows success in a good cause. His next duty was to attend to the vulgar calls of appetite, and Van Laret's Johannisberg and venison pleased him exceedingly.

"Come, captain! a bumper!" he cried; "we'll drink a bumper to what or *whom* you like—to *her*—aye—I see it in your looks—don't say a word, my dear fellow! down with it. Well, serjeant, what's the matter now?"

"I am sorry to tell you," said the subaltern, advancing respectfully into the room, "that, if we don't start soon, I can't be answerable for some of the men keeping their saddles. I don't know how it is. They haven't taken so *much* neither. The beer must be confoundedly strong."

"Never mind, serjeant!" said the colonel,

gaily, "we shan't move till day-break, or perhaps a trifle earlier. There are clouds between us and the moon, my lad, and the cursed forest is full of old stumps and ugly roots—we might get some broken knees—where's the lieutenant and the cornet?"

"At supper, sir, with the steward," replied the serjeant.

"Are they? take my compliments to them, and if its perfectly agreeable, I'll come and take a glass with them—and then," he continued, turning to Charles, "you can finish your letter, for I see your eye is always glancing that way—and, compliments apart, a lover, with his mistress in his head, is not the very best of companions."

On the serjeant's return, Charles was left alone to complete his delightful task, which occupied him till after midnight—and then the packet, containing a full and particular account

of all his adventures, since he parted from Isabella, together with blended hopes, fears, assurances of affection, &c. &c. as usual in such correspondence, was duly signed, sealed, and delivered to the charming little rosy handmaiden, by whom it was carefully deposited in the afore-mentioned trunk, to be conveyed to Liege, by an especial messenger. And it went safely, and arrived at the inn before a person from the inquisitor's came with a note from the young lady, desiring her luggage to be given to the bearer. Isabella's feelings on opening it must be left, at present, to the reader's imagination.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the present day, as far as one can judge from the forms of society, there are no lieutenants, cornets, or ensigns: the gentlemen on whom such offices devolve, being merely misters or esquires, as they may happen to be addressed either by word or writing. In former times it was not thus—and, consequently our gallant colonel gave unto each of his subs, his proper title, as they sate round the convivial board.

Lieutenant Hermann was what is commonly called a “hard-headed” Walloon, about five and thirty years of age, robust in frame, and a good soldier, who loved to ride hard, fight hard, and, occasionally, to drink hard; and on the

evening in question, he had indulged the latter propensity to an extent which might have floored any but an old practitioner; but in him the effects were scarcely perceptible. The cornet was one of the millions, whom "nature sends into the world and puts no mark upon them." He judged of the fitness of things by the rank of the persons by whom they were enacted, and loved to be placed upon something like a footing of temporary equality with his superiors.

"Have you changed the guard, lieutenant?" asked the colonel.

"Yes," replied Hermann; "twice since we came, and in half an hour shall change them again. Fair play's the word! we don't get into such quarters as this every day. To my thinking, the Pope himself can't show a better glass of wine than this, and my old friend here knows where to lay his hand upon another bottle; don't you, my fine old evergreen?"

"Aye, aye," said Momper, dolefully; "there's plenty, and I don't care who drinks it *now*."

"Come, cheer up, my lad," cried the colonel, "*you* have no occasion to alarm yourself. The scoundrel himself told me that you had no knowledge of this damnable transaction."

"Not I, indeed," replied Momper; "but what's to become of me, I don't know; my character is all that I had to look to in the world, and who will employ me now? I have lived here, hand and glove, as it were, with a murderer; and, though I say it, was the principal means of saving him, after I thought the prisoner had escaped."

"Well, well, you've been deceived," said the kind-hearted colonel, "as many an honest man has been before, and will be again, by a rogue."

"Do you mean to take him away with you?" asked Momper.

"Not I," replied the colonel; "let the law

take its course in its own way. If I was to take him, maybe he'd be acquitted after all, for want of some form or other, or want of evidence, and then there would be an action for illegal imprisonment brought against me, mayhap, and I should have to dance attendance and pay the piper too for the lord knows how long. No, no, let the hangman and the lawyers do their own dirty work! I've got the poor fellow's money back again, and that's all I care about."

This information appeared to please Momper almost as much as the announcement of a protracted stay at the castle did the lieutenant; and the night went merrily along, to the destruction of Van Laret's choice Johannisberg. The cornet was deputed to go round the stables, and see that the horses were furnished with plenty of litter; and the serjeants were called in and ordered to allow the men to make merry,

but not to overdo the thing. Nor was Van Laret himself forgotten. He was conveyed carefully to his bed, furnished with whatever he chose to ask for, and then left to his own reflections, with a sentinel at his door.

The colonel was not in the habit of indulging himself, but the Johannisberg, and a feeling of conscious security were too tempting. So, as the lieutenant knew somewhat of the points about a horse, and had seen some service, they entered into long disquisitions, and told long stories concerning what had, might, and ought to be done under different circumstances; and Momper, not being entirely ignorant of such matters, took a part in the conversation, which lasted till past midnight, when the captain made his appearance, as unconscious as themselves of the lateness of the hour. He was warmly welcomed, and another bottle was produced; and then the turn of the conversation changed, and

they talked of the day's adventure, in which they had nothing to regret but their disappointment at not finding the well-furnished armoury.

Charles fancied he perceived a gleam of cunning exultation in Momper's countenance at the mention of this circumstance, and resolved to be upon the watch. The situation of his companions became gradually more and more apparent. The cornet, after many vain attempts to avoid yawning and appear interested in what passed, nodded his head, and fell asleep in his chair. The lieutenant tried to rouse him with a cheer, which produced only a sort of grunt, and the colonel observed, that it was better to let him alone, as no doubt the poor fellow was tired. Momper now strengthened Charles's suspicions, by slyly placing another bottle on the table without orders, and he resolved to imitate, as nearly as possible, the manners and conduct of his comrades. Accordingly, he

ever and anon filled his dark green glass, and lifted it to his lips—praised the beer, which he said one of the men had brought him in a tankard, and which he couldn't help emptying, half an hour before ; and, altogether, acted his part so well, that the poor colonel winked at the lieutenant, and they began forthwith to ply the young soldier with bumpers and toasts.

As Charles had really taken nothing, and wished to see the end of the affair as soon as possible, he scrupled not to accept the challenge ; and, in a short time, the veteran fell asleep, while endeavouring to get through a long story concerning some horse-dealing transactions.

"A good example," hiccuped Charles ; and settled himself in his chair, as if to follow it.

"Here's to the fallen brave !" said the lieutenant, rising on his legs, and tossing off a bumper ; "and now, I think I shall take

a nap too. But I should prefer a bed, if you can find me one, old buck. There goes my captain, snoring away! Not used to ride hard—good sort of young fellow too—but a man must be seasoned, you see, to it, before he can stand it, eh! old gentleman? It's a burning shame to leave this half bottle or more—I've a great mind to finish it. No, I won't!—enough's as good as a feast, as they say. So, I'll just take it up stairs with me.—Come along, you old shotten herring looking chap! It'll do for a stirrup-cup in the morning. We must be stirring early.—Never neglect duty.—Come along."

When they had advanced some few steps along the passage, Momper turned suddenly back, and turned the key of the door upon the sleepers. Charles started up and was about to call to his lieutenant, who, even in his present state, was more than a match for the steward;

but luckily his hand fell upon the staple of the lock, and it struck him that the bolt might easily be forced back with his sword. He therefore listened attentively till he heard the lieutenant's voice upon the stairs, and, as cautiously as possible, accomplished his release. His next precaution was to divest himself of his military boots, and to ascend a narrow back staircase, at the top of which he still heard the lieutenant speaking. The light of the moon enabled him to select a niche wherein he might conceal himself while Momper passed, but he had not waited there long, ere the old man, bidding his charge, "good night," came out of a door at some distance, and immediately proceeded in a contrary direction. Keeping as far off as possible, without losing sight of the chace, the captain followed through a series of passages, which led round one wing of the castle, and then they began to descend, till he

felt assured that they must be on a level with the foundation of the building. Momper then stopt at a large iron door, which he easily unlocked and again began to descend. Here Charles rushed forward, fearing that he had escaped, as the door swung back to its place. Fortunately, however, he discovered that it was not fastened on the inside, and he pressed it gently open, and continued the pursuit. They were now, evidently, in a well stocked cellar; and Charles, secreting himself behind a butt, anxiously watched the motions of the old man, who proceeded with great difficulty, by means of a huge iron lever, to separate two casks, which stood close together; and, having at length effected the task, he crept in between them. It became now necessary for Charles to advance, in order to observe what was passing behind. He then perceived a small door, secured by two large iron bolts, which were

prevented from being drawn back by staples and padlocks, of which Momper soon produced the keys, and set himself industriously to work at what seemed by no means an easy task: for the locks had been evidently long unused, and the bolts were rusted in their sockets.

"Well," he muttered, "this is the last difficulty, however; nobody has been here since I fetched the gun for young Sourkrout, and I took care not to bolt the other doors. I suppose this is the way that Van Laret let the prisoner out by, after all—for I never could believe the other story quite."

As Charles was now close to him, being merely concealed by one of the casks, he fortunately caught every word, though uttered in a low tone. At this moment a sound as of the distant tolling of a bell was heard. "Two o'clock!" exclaimed Momper, "and they're to be off by daylight. I shall never be in time;"

and pushing back the door, he caught up the lamp and hurried forward, followed now more closely by his pursuer, in proportion to his increased anxiety at what he had just heard. Their way was through a narrow passage, hewn in the solid rock, and the descent, without steps, became extremely rapid. In a few minutes they reached a chamber, or rather a dry cavern, where the delighted captain saw by the faint gleam of the lamp, swords, and pistols, and carbines, and cross-bows, piled upon the floor, and hanging against the sides. Momper placed his lamp on the ground, and proceeded to take down a brace of richly mounted pistols, weapons with which the captain was then unprovided, and the thought suddenly struck him, as he stood in the dark passage, that an unlucky shot might endanger not only his own life, but those of his comrades, who were sleeping soundly, in fancied security. He therefore sprang

forward, and seized the astonished and trembling steward, as he was reaching down his prize.

"Silence!" he said sternly. "How could I help calling out?" cried Momper, "You frightened me pretty near out of my senses."

"What do you think you deserve?" asked Charles, holding his prisoner by the collar.

"Deserve!" said the steward, "Why, now, do you think it was my duty to tell you where the arms were?"

"It is useless to prevaricate," observed the captain, "you were about to make your escape, with the hope of raising an alarm, and cutting off our retreat."

"How is that possible?" exclaimed Momper, "How could I have got out this way?"

"That is exactly what I mean to know," said Charles, "so take up your lamp and proceed, just as you would if I had not found you. No hesitation—unless you prefer to stay where you

are, with a yard of cold steel through your body," and he suited the action to the word.

Dark narrow passages are so much alike, that it is not worth while to relate the particulars of their progress to the sally port, which Van Laret had availed himself of on the memorable occasion for which he was now receiving his reward. Their subterranean walk, with a slight examination of the armoury on the way back, occupied about an hour; and then Charles desired to see the prison of his friend.

Momper, by this time, had recovered his presence of mind, and assured the captain that his only intention in leaving the castle, was to get away from Van Laret, with whom he vowed he would not live another hour. His assurances produced no reply, and when they reached the southwestern tower, Charles sate himself down for a minute, in the chair so long occupied by poor Snell.

"The gentleman has recovered from his wounds I understand," said the steward. "And I dare say he told you, sir, that I did everything in my power to make him comfortable, as far as was consistent with my duty."

"Yes," said the captain, "he did you justice in that respect, and you may attribute whatever leniency we feel disposed to show you to that circumstance."

Momper again averred that he had no evil intentions towards the visitors, and was answered by a contemptuous "pshaw!" Soon after, Charles left his prisoner, securely locked and bolted in the tower of which he had formerly been the gaoler. His next duty was to summon his lieutenant, whom he found some difficulty in awaking from his most inharmonious slumber.

"Bless my soul! captain," said he, "it is not daybreak yet, I'm sure! I *never* oversleep myself, no matter what time I turn in."

"No, Hermann," replied Charles, "it is not daybreak yet—but I have made a discovery—we must be stirring—there's treason in the castle."

"Treason!" exclaimed the lieutenant; and, in an instant he was broad awake, standing erect and firm.

"Sit down—sit down," continued the captain; "the danger's over now;" and he related the particulars of his adventure.

"Admirable!" cried the generous lieutenant.

"I'll tell you what, captain. I'll own it all now. I've often thought it hard that I hadn't the command of our troop, and fancied you too young a soldier to have such a charge; but all that's over now. Will you give me your hand and forgive me? That's right! May I live to see you a general officer and be one of your staff! Ten to one but you've saved us all—fools—jackasses as we were—for we suspected the silky old

greybeard, till the wine got into our heads ; and then we were all fellows together, and told the serjeant, who had him in charge, to go and join his comrades, and we would look after the old chap—we—a precious sort of guard ! I've a great mind to say that I'll never touch a drop of wine again ! But no—that would be wrong," he continued, casting his eyes towards the bottle, which he just remembered bringing up stairs with him.

"Yes," observed Charles, smiling, "that would be wrong. Wine in moderation does one no harm, and is good for the health."

"Nothing half so good," exclaimed the thorough-going campaigner ; "I never was better ! Not a symptom of headache ! Pulse true as a clock ! So, just for the sake of consistency and steadiness, I'll take *one* glass. There's nothing like a hair of the old dog—there !"

"What do you mean by consistency," asked Charles.

"Consistency?" replied Hermann, "why, to make one day *something* like another. Not one day plenty and the next downright starvation, as the old woman fed her pig, to get one row of fat, and one row of lean. There—*now* my nerves are as steady, and my head as clear as ever they were in my life. Not but what our country fashion of 'Schaaps' is better after all. There's nothing like your good *old* kirchenwasser or Schiedam for a morning's whet. But—now—sir, what's to be done? Shall I rouse the men?"

"I should prefer taking the colonel's opinion," said Charles, doubtfully, "if you think——"

"Never you fear, sir," cried the lieutenant, "he'll wake up as lively as a robin! He's an old campaigner, captain, and tough as an old holly-bush. So let's go and give him a whisper!"

Charles was both delighted and surprised to find this assertion verified ; for Colonel Houlon no sooner understood what had occurred than he appeared as cool and collected as ever ; and after passing a warm eulogium on the captain's prudence and sagacity, proposed that they should all three immediately visit the armoury, to inspect and take an account of its contents, previous to the admission of the subalterns and privates. This task was accomplished in a most systematic style, and the three officers brought away with them certain articles of superior workmanship and value, not forgetting a similar charge for the poor dormant cornet.

The troopers were then roused and admitted to the spoil ; and a formidable appearance they made when drawn up at day-break, with one or two extra brace of pistols stuck in every belt, and arms of all descriptions slung and tied about their saddles and accoutrements.

"You'll be welcome back, Captain Randolph," said the colonel; "this is foraging to some purpose; and all your own doing."

"Remember the belt, colonel," said Charles.

"Phoo, phoo! that's nothing—a private affair," was the reply.

"I think it wouldn't be a bad thing to take a few bottles of that same Johannisberg with us," observed the lieutenant. "I think we could contrive to ——"

"Damn the Johannisberg!" exclaimed the colonel; "I shall hate the very name as long as I live. Captain, we are under your command now; I've done with it."

Having first given orders for Momper's release, Charles resumed his station; and the troop, conducted by their former guide, took the nearest way across the country, and arrived, without any occurrence of importance, at the camp of the prince.

The story of Fido's attack upon the murderer, and the consequent recovery of the money, together with his master's subterranean excursion in search of arms, spread from tent to tent; and, gathering as it went, soon became "a tough yarn" in the hands of marvellous old practitioners in the ancient mystery of story telling. The consequences were, that the young captain and his great dog drew all eyes upon them wherever they appeared, and his became a favourite troop for young adventurous recruits. The prince himself condescended to inquire into the particulars, and evinced great satisfaction at the recovery of Snell's money, as he well remembered that name among those of the many individuals to whom he was indebted for supplies. Neither was Charles's adroitness in discovering the armoury lost upon him, though the honourable concealment of his brother officer's real situation, at the time, prevented

the affair from appearing exactly in its true colours.

"There is a young gentleman without, who wishes to speak to Captain Randolph," said a servant, as they were at dinner the next day.

"Show him up," exclaimed the colonel. Charles started from his seat, and nearly overset his neighbour as the youth entered, for it was Ernest Fréron. When the first burst of surprise and pleasure was past, the captain could not avoid being struck with the gloomy and saturnine expression of his friend's countenance. It was some time ere they could prevail upon him to take a seat at table; and when he did, it seemed more for the sake of getting rid of importunity, than to join in what was going forward. Wine, he said, he never took; and his replies to various questions put to him by the officers, in order "to draw him out," and make him feel at ease, were answered as briefly as

possible, and in a manner closely bordering upon rudeness. When the meal was ended, Charles took him aside, and, as a matter of course, had a long and interesting conversation, which it would be a work of supererogation to repeat here, as it related to all that had occurred to the various persons concerned in recent family events, including the discovery of Van Laret's real character.

"I knew," said Ernest, "he must be a villain. It is stamped on his countenance. Elinor read it directly;" and he repeated much the same observations which he had made to his sister on their first arrival at the castle.

"It is a dangerous theory," observed Charles, smiling at his friend's warmth, which he knew not then had become almost habitual. "But, thank God! your sister is out of his hands."

"I trust she is safe!" exclaimed the youth. "I fear she may be uneasy concerning me. I

love my sister; yes—brother cannot love more; but there is a cause for which we must leave brother, and sister, and father and—but why talk of that? I have none! It is the cause of religion—of truth—of our oppressed country—of the righteous of the earth in prison, in chains, and in bondage—bondage to which that of Egypt was as the toil of the menial to the agonies of the martyr! I know not why I have thus allowed my mind to wander to other matters of trivial import, so long as we have been conversing together; but for *that* cause *alone* came I here—to that cause alone will I henceforward devote body and soul!—Charles Randolph!” he continued, grasping his friend’s arm with a violence proportionate to the fierce determination expressed in every feature of his countenance, “Charles Randolph, I will be an avenger!”

The captain scarcely knew what to reply.

He looked, he heard, and was astonished and alarmed for the state of the youth's intellects.

"I trust," resumed Ernest, somewhat more calmly, "that *you* will not oppose me in the career of duty."

"By no means," replied Charles, "you see that I have entered upon it myself, and with all my heart and soul too: only you startled me by your vehemence. Have you well reflected on the step you wish to take?"

This question was asked with the grave air of an elder, and, *therefore*, a more experienced person; but Charles might have remembered that his own entrance into military life was not exactly the consequence of reflection. So it is with most of us. Prudence and reflection are ever talked about by those whose actions indicate that the name is all they know of either.

"I *have* reflected!" replied Ernest. "Yes, deeply—in silence and solitude; and have taken

counsel—such counsel as man gives not,” and he produced from his breast a volume of the Holy Writings. “This was my father’s! If I fall, it is for my sister; and I commission you to bear to her the sacred treasure; but,” he added, as if exulting in the thought of death and slaughter, “you must seek it where the enemy lie thickest on the plain.”

The rest of their conversation was more tranquil, and terminated by Charles’s assurance that he would use all the influence he possessed to forward the views of his young friend. The first step was to introduce him to the colonel, who, after a short interview, said that the poor fellow was more than half mad; but nevertheless would do very well for a trooper, and recommended the captain to take him into his troop, for the present, as a volunteer.

“He’s got a good horse,” he added, “and that’s the principal thing. Talk as you like of

men, it's the weight and strength of the *beast* that bears down all before it in a charge."

This arrangement was scarcely made, to the satisfaction of all parties, when our young captain was summoned to look at another recruit of a different description.

He was a sturdy, thickset countryman; and directly he caught sight of Charles, he exclaimed, "Aye, it's all right now! Hang me if I'll say any thing more to any of you!" This was addressed to several bystanders, who had been endeavouring to persuade him to join their regiments. He then took off his hat to the captain, and said, "I knew it was the same dog; and so, says I, I'll see *his* master first any how. Don't you recollect me, sir?"

"Not exactly," replied Charles, "and yet, I'm sure I've seen your face somewhere."

"Well," said the man, evidently somewhat mortified, "I didn't think you'd have forgot

me so soon. I'm Phil, the blacksmith of Desmond."

"To be sure!" exclaimed the captain, who, in his short service, had already learned some of the practices of recruiting officers. "How could I be so stupid! But you must forgive me, for I have had to do with so *many* new faces lately. This is the champion of his neighbourhood, colonel, whom you have often heard me speak about, who gave me such a lesson on my way back from Maestricht."

"Why, as for that," said the gratified blacksmith, "it was much of a muchness between us; only I think you'd a little the best of it. But I'll tell you how it is, captain; I lost my poor wife soon after that, and perhaps mightn't have minded my business so much as I ought afterwards, because I couldn't take any delight in it nor my home neither, after she was gone—and that's the truth of the matter; and so, you

see, my trade fell off, and then the gentry got frightened about the talk of war and went away, several as owed me money, into foreign parts, and some of 'em forgot to pay me first, and the farmers couldn't or wouldn't; and so, says I, I'll just go and try my fortune in the wars too. And so, if you've a mind to have me, I'm your man, and, though I say it, as shouldn't say it, mayhap, I'll shoe a horse and break a head with any man in the army."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the colonel. "You're just the lad we want! We'll find you employment both ways, I'll warrant. Why, captain, that dog of yours must have a sash round him; for this is the second recruit he's brought you to day."

It was in consequence of meeting Fido that Ernest discovered his friend, of whose's joining the army he was, of course, entirely ignorant.

The colonel had then a long, and to him an

interesting conversation with the new recruit respecting horses; and took him through the troop, more in the style of a keeper showing a menagerie than an officer talking to a private; and Phil was pronounced by the veteran that night at supper, to be the greatest acquisition the regiment had ever made since it was first formed; no great compliment, perhaps, to some of the company then present; but the colonel was on his hobby, and happy is the man who can ride *his* without giving greater cause of offence

CHAPTER V.

THE ancient and populous city of Liege is situated on the Meuse, at a point where that river, after having long pursued an easterly direction from Namur, sweeps round to the left and runs northward towards Maestricht, which is likewise upon its banks. At the latter town the Duke of Alva had concentrated his forces, and closely watched the proceedings of his adversary, of whose limited resources for the payment of his troops, the too-highly talented oppressor was fully aware.

The Prince of Orange, disappointed in his hopes of admission into Liege, now resolved to march toward the enemy, and try the event of

a battle. Upon this the duke moved his troops from their cantonments; and the two armies were shortly manœuvring opposite each other, divided only by the river, the rapid and uncertain course of which appeared to defy any attempt at hostilities.

The prince, however, was resolved to pass this barrier, and the whole attention of his opponent was employed to prevent him from carrying his design into effect, by placing strong detachments on the banks wherever the stream appeared fordable, and marching his principal force according to the movements of the enemy. Some time was thus occupied in marching and countermarching, or to use a more familiar but expressive term, in "dodging one another." At length the prince collected all his cavalry for the performance of a very singular duty. Horses and men, and even loaded waggons, were ordered to advance into the stream at

“dead of night.” The angry waters rushed darkly and furiously by, eddying and foaming amid the unusual impediments to their course; but their violence was thus broken, and, a little lower down the stream, the infantry were thereby enabled to ford across, in a place where the attempt had been heretofore deemed impracticable. For this contrivance the prince is supposed to have been indebted to his classical recollections, as Julius Cæsar made use of similar means to effect the passage of his army across the Ligeris. That the achievement, however, was not of easy execution, may be inferred from the Duke of Alva’s remark, when informed the next morning of what had happened.

“How!” he asked, scornfully, and incredulously, of an officer who brought him the intelligence, “do you imagine the enemy have wings?”

The Prince of Orange had determined; immediately on reaching the opposite bank, to march forward and take the Spaniards by surprise; and he issued orders to that effect: but, unhappily, his German troops refused to advance till they had a night's refreshment, and thus was lost the only opportunity that ever offered itself of compelling the enemy to fight at a disadvantage. Similar conduct on the part of the Germans had already caused the failure of Count Lewis's expedition; and it is said by historians, that they never yielded due obedience to their commander?"

From the proximity of the two armies, frequent skirmishes were unavoidable; but no affair worthy of a higher name occurred during the whole of the campaign, after the important event just related.

We take up the history of our troopers from the following morning.

Colonel Houlon, though highly gratified at the success of the enterprise, was in great anxiety about the horses, anticipating coughs and colds and a thousand other evils, in consequence of their having stood so long in the water. He and Phil, the ci-devant blacksmith, were bustling in all directions, and the dragoons were excited to keep rubbing away at their horses, with an alacrity which, under existing circumstances, was perhaps equally beneficial to man and beast. The mortification to all stout hearts and willing minds may be readily conceived when the order was given to advance to attack the enemy, and the Germans refused to stir. None felt it more deeply than the two young friends, little dreaming that the gratification of their present wishes would, in all probability, have caused the destruction of their future happiness throughout life. The poor colonel walked to and fro, sadly dejected, mut-

tering every now and then a deep oath; and cursing the gormandizing heavy-headed scoundrels, who thought they were paid and clothed for nothing but to eat, drink, and sleep.

"We needn't be idle, however," cried he, starting at length from his reverie. "Captain Randolph, your troop is in the best condition, and besides you had the best of it last night. I don't think you were fetlock deep in the water, and some of our fellows had their stirrups under, till I told 'em to sling 'em up and sit like tailors. We must have forage, and now's the time, while the enemy will be engaged in strengthening their entrenchments against to-morrow; and these infernal foreigners are asleep, confound them! But it's of no use talking about that. See what you can do for us—you've been pretty lucky generally—but I don't think you'll find much difficulty, as nobody dreams of our being on this side the river."

Charles immediately called out his troop, and proceeded into the country, where he was somewhat mortified at finding that the enemy's foraging parties had latterly been too frequently. Some of the farmers did not hesitate to express their joy at seeing him, and wished success to the good cause; but the substantial provender was not forthcoming.

"I think, Hermann," said he to his lieutenant, "that we are only wasting time on this ground, and had better dash on for a mile or two at once. You remember what the colonel said about the enemy?"

"Aye, aye," replied the lieutenant, "they'll be all hands earthing up to-day. And I'll tell you what, captain, it wouldn't be a bad thing to have a look at the public-houses and inns along the Liege road to Maestricht. It can't be far off, and *they* must have corn and hay at all events."

"Who is best acquainted with that road?" exclaimed Charles; and one of the troopers, who declared he knew it, every inch, offered to conduct them to an inn where they were not only likely to find what they wanted, as the landlord was a substantial farmer, but which likewise stood upon an eminence, commanding an extensive view, so as to prevent any danger of surprise. As the chance both of safety and success appeared to depend on their promptness in action, Charles gave the word, and they dashed forward to the place, which had been occupied by a small detachment of the enemy till within half an hour of their arrival.

"They'll soon begin to march up that third hill," said the landlord, pointing with his finger. "They were sent for all in a hurry, and *now* I can guess the reason."

"We shall soon overtake them!" cried Ernest.

"What think you, Hermann?" exclaimed the captain, scarcely less eager for an affray.

"I don't think they're worth losing time about," replied the more experienced lieutenant. "The country's too close, sir, and the ditches and hedges are too much in their favour, now they've taken the alarm. They'd see us directly we moved from here. Perhaps we might knock down a man or two, and take two or three prisoners by good luck; but we could'nt do much more now they've got such a start of us, and we must calculate on some loss, as they'd give us a few shots from behind the high banks and hedges where we could'nt come at 'em. I don't think it will answer, captain; but I'm ready and willing to try it."

"Thank you, Hermann," said Charles, "I know it—but your counsel is good, and I'll follow it."

"Why," observed the lieutenant, "it's one

of the most provoking things in the service, to be cooped up with a parcel of fine fellows well mounted, in a cursed narrow road like this, to be popped at by a set of skulking chaps whom one can't see. But suppose we were to lie snug for a few minutes. How is the country beyond that hill? Is it more open?"

The trooper who had guided them replied to the contrary, and said it was covered with small hop-grounds and fields, strongly fenced. The idea of pursuit was, therefore, reluctantly abandoned, and they proceeded to execute the more immediate duties of their expedition, in which, being furnished with money, no difficulty occurred.

While Charles and Ernest, with the lieutenant and cornet were partaking of a hasty meal, to which the fatigue of the night and their subsequent ride gave a more than common zest, the landlord made his appearance, and with many

apologies expressed a hope that they would not be offended at what he was going to say, "but," he continued, "we have only this one private room, and there are two ladies just arrived in a carriage, and one of their servants says they are people of consequence and must be alone; and they're going to stop dinner."

The hint was, of course, sufficient—the little party immediately broke up their present quarters, and adjourned to a bedchamber to finish their repast. When a little bustle was heard in the passage, the cornet, rightly judging that the ladies were coming up, resolved to "have a peep, and see what they were like;" but one had already entered the parlour. The other, however, he pronounced to be a "devilish fine woman," and took the first opportunity, at the landlord's entrance, of inquiring who they were.

"I really don't know," replied mine host,

"but I'm sure they're people of some consequence—for one of the servants always remains in the room with them, and the other gives orders."

"We must find out," observed the lieutenant, as soon as the landlord was gone; "perhaps they may be worth taking."

"You cannot mean that it is any part of our duty to capture women?" exclaimed Charles.

"Why, as to that," replied Hermann, "it depends upon circumstances, and who they belong to. I've known 'em of great use when you come to talk of an exchange of prisoners. A pretty pair of blue eyes will overmatch a brace of epaulets."

"I cannot approve of such policy," observed Charles, gravely.

"Nay, nay," said the good-humoured lieutenant, "I was only joking. I have no design against the ladies, I assure you—only, if they

should happen to be relations of the Duke of Alva, for instance, why, we might do a worse thing, and perhaps save some brave fellow's life, for I don't expect the Netherlanders among us need expect quarter."

The conversation here dropped, and a few minutes after the landlord again entered; and, as he waited upon his guests, remarked that the ladies, particularly the eldest, seemed much agitated at the idea of soldiers being in the house.

"You may tell her not to alarm herself," said the captain; "we shall soon be gone."

"She appears in a very low way, poor thing," continued mine host: "she didn't seem disposed to have any dinner, only her servant says we must get something just to try if she will eat."

"Tell her what I say," the captain repeated; "it may relieve her mind."

"Did you mention who we were?" asked the lieutenant.

"Why, no," replied the landlord, smiling, "and I hope you'll forgive me. I said you were some of the king's troops; for I felt pretty sure they wouldn't have stopped else, because they are Catholics."

"I should think our people are nearly ready by this time," observed Charles.

"The cornet will soon tell us," said Hermann. Here, landlord!—the bottle's empty—be quick, will you, there's a good fellow, and let us know what we have to pay."

In about a quarter of an hour the cornet made his report, and the trumpet sounded to horse. The troop was then drawn up in front of the inn, and the officers duly made their appearance. A little vanity is perhaps excusable on such occasions, particularly in young men, and our captain could not help feeling somewhat mortified, when, casting his eyes, by accident, towards the window of the room where he knew

the strange ladies were, to perceive it was unoccupied.

He gave the word of command, and they were moving off, when the landlord of the inn came bustling up to the lieutenant, and told him he was particularly wanted by one of the ladies up stairs.

"There must be some mistake, I think," said Hermann.

"No, sir," replied mine host; "she particularly said, 'the oldest of the officers', those were her words."

"Well, then, I suppose I must go, captain?" asked the lieutenant.

"To be sure," replied Charles. "I'll just walk the troops on slowly. You'll not be long, I dare say, and will easily overtake us."

"Aye, aye, never fear," exclaimed the lieutenant, dismounting, "I'll soon be with you. I

dare say she only wants to hear if there's any news. Women are always very curious."

"Not *very*, if one may judge from appearances," thought the captain and the cornet, and even Ernest fancied it somewhat odd that the window should be deserted—but no remark was made, and they continued to move slowly forward till they came to a bend in the road, which would have deprived them of a view of the inn, and was near the spot where they had to turn off, in order to take across the country. Here the captain called a halt, and expressed some degree of surprise that they could see nothing of the lieutenant. When men are waiting, the time always passes slowly, and they began wondering what could possibly detain him so long; but, in reality, they had not halted above a minute or two, when Hermann was seen to run out of the house, jump upon his horse, and advance towards them at a full gallop.

"Here he comes!" cried the cornet.

"Aye, neck or nothing!" added Phil, the smith, who was now become a sort of privileged man.

"I thought he'd known better than to tear away at that rate along a hard road. It's enough to splinter any horse, and down hill, too—that's the way to chest-founder——"

"Well, we have no occasion to *wait* for him *now*!" exclaimed the captain; "so, forward, my lads!"

"Hollo! ho! halt!" shouted the lieutenant, as he dashed furiously up with the rear. "Halt! for God's sake! Captain Randolph! where are you?"

In order to account for this mad riding and hallooing, we must follow Lieutenant Hermann on his return into the inn. On his arrival at the parlour door, he was told by a manservant, as he supposed, though out of livery,

that it was a private room, and he could not be admitted.

"What's the meaning of this?" asked the blunt lieutenant, somewhat angrily. "The lady said she wished to speak with me!"

"Yes!" exclaimed a faint female voice within, "I do, *indeed!*"

"Come in, sir!" cried a second and shriller tone.

The man still held the door in his hand, and looked round, as if for instructions; and then again turned towards the lieutenant, and assured him that there must be some mistake, and he had come to the wrong room.

"Pray, ladies!" exclaimed the bewildered lieutenant, "is it your good will and pleasure that I should come in or not?"

"Oh, yes! yes! pray do!" cried both voices together. The man, however, still appeared disposed to resist his passage.

"Get out of the way, you scoundrel!" shouted the angry soldier; and with a thrust of

his sinewy arm he sent the fellow reeling to the other side of the room, while the door flew wide open, and disclosed to his view two young ladies sitting at the dinner table.

“ I trust you’ll excuse this rude manner of entrance,” exclaimed Hermann, “ since you can bear witness that it is not of my seeking; and whatever your commands may be, pray lose no time in ceremony, as I am now on duty, and my troop is already gone forward.”

“ I will be very brief,” said the elder lady. “ We are two females, helpless, friendless, and in danger. I have heard much of military honour and generosity. We throw ourselves upon you for protection.”

“ Then you shall find it,” said the lieutenant; “ but where’s the danger?” and he looked round, as if hoping to see some monster creep forth from a corner, on which to exercise his prowess.

"It is from these men, who seem to be our servants," said the lady, "they are——"

"I'm sure," cried the person who had held the door, now first stepping boldly forward, "that the gentleman will not allow himself to be misled by any false notions of compassion, to interrupt the course of justice. No officer of his majesty——"

"Damn his majesty!" exclaimed the sturdy lieutenant.

No words can describe the extraordinary and instantaneous effect which this vehement ejaculation produced on the hearers. The man shrunk back aghast, seemingly quite lost in astonishment and dismay. The lady, rude and violent as the expression was, sat listening, as though she wished to hear it repeated—her lips were parted—her eyes widely opened—her eyebrows raised—and a sort of wild, joyous, yet scarcely credulous smile played about the

corners of her mouth, and spread its influence over the whole of her beautiful and expressive countenance. Then she lifted up her hands, as if returning thanks—and, a moment after, sank slowly down upon her knees, and appeared communing with the unseen. Her companion, who was much younger, found utterance first, and leaving her chair, walked towards the wondering lieutenant, and took him by the hand. She then looked up innocently in his face, and, after examining it awhile, said,

“Yes, you are a good man. I can see that plain enough. You don’t look like the people we have been obliged to see lately. Now, tell me who you are?”

“To be sure I will, my pretty dear,” said the lieutenant; “I’m an officer of dragoons, in the service of the good Prince of Orange, come to fight against his majesty, as they call the tyrant, and we hope to kick him and his popish train

clean out of the country before we have done with them."

"I'll go with you and help you!" exclaimed the child—"I don't fear death now." The elder lady had by this time recovered sufficiently to ask, in a tremulous tone, if he was not a prisoner, that he was on the western side of the rock.

"Not I, nor any of us, thank God!" replied the lieutenant, proudly; "but I trust we shall ere long take a few. Our whole army crossed the river last night. However, you *must* excuse my being in a hurry, madam, for I shall be left behind. Tell me, what can I do for you?"

"You have the command of the party here?" said the young lady.

"Not exactly," replied Hermann, "I'm only lieutenant—the captain is gone on with the troop."

"That is unfortunate!" exclaimed the lady,

with a sigh. "Could you—would he, do you think, escort us to the army? we shall find friends there, and shall not trouble you farther."

As the plain dealing soldier afterwards honestly confessed, he was a little staggered by the frankness of this proposition, since "it would have been no joke for a lieutenant of dragoons to find himself saddled with a brace of petticoats."

"Are you sure that your friends are now with the army, madam?" he inquired; "for otherwise, though I love the profession as much as any man, I must say you'll not find a camp the most comfortable place in the world for a lady."

"I am almost certain," she replied; "but, perhaps you can tell me if——?"

And she hesitated. "No doubt, no doubt," said the lieutenant; "that is, if he's in the

cavalry. I know 'em all. What's his name, madam?"

"Charles Randolph," she answered—and a faint blush passed across her pale countenance as she uttered the name.

"Randolph! Captain Randolph!" exclaimed Hermann; "know him, eh? why that is most extraordinary! he's my captain, madam. He's just gone forward with the troop! we've been dining together here in another room, though, indeed, we began our meal in this, and he sate in the very chair you now have under you!"

"Gracious Heaven!" ejaculated the lady. She could utter no more. For a moment her hands were clasped together, and her lips moved, as if endeavouring to express thanks; but all effort was vain, and with a convulsive sob she sank forward upon the table, hiding her face in her hands to conceal tears of joy and gratitude. The lieutenant now began to

surmise what the reader has doubtless, for some time, been aware of; and his suspicions were confirmed by the conduct of the little girl, who first endeavoured to comfort her friend, and then suddenly turned towards him and exclaimed,

“Go, go! ride as fast as you can, and fetch him! Bring Charles Randolph here, or she’ll be dead!” and she literally pushed him out of the room.

He had scarcely mounted and left the inn, when the two attendants, whose real characters need not be told to the reader, made their appearance, and informed the ladies that the carriage was waiting.

“We shall not go another step with you,” said Elinor, boldly.

“Won’t you—you young heretic vixen!” exclaimed one of the men. “We’ll see that!” and he endeavoured to seize her, but she nimbly

eluded his grasp, and ran screaming round the room.

"What is the matter?" asked Isabella, looking up, with tears still in her eyes. "Are they gone?"

"Shut the door!" roared one of the men to his companion, who immediately turned the key. "We must proceed directly," he continued, taking Isabella firmly by the arm. "You could not suppose that officers on duty would be encumbered with you. Come, come, it's of no use to make any resistance."

"Wait but a minute," said his prisoner.

"No—not a moment! You must come now."

"Don't go, Isabella!" cried her companion, who had contrived to open the window and thrust out her head. "He's got to the soldiers already!"

"Drag that young imp away from the window!" exclaimed the man, having the principal

authority, while he himself endeavoured to force Isabella out of her chair.

"I won't leave it!" cried Elinor, clinging firmly to the bars. "See, you wretch, how you've hurt my arm!"

"And I'll tear it off, if you don't let go," said the inhuman ruffian.

"They're coming! they're coming!" she shrieked, wild with joy. "One—two—three! No—they're *all* coming! What a cloud of dust!"

If either of the men had heard the whole of the conversation between Isabella and the lieutenant, they would now have given up all further attempt; but not being aware that any particular interest could be felt for their prisoners by the troopers (as the attendant in the room had slid out immediately after his majesty was abused), they resolved to get their charge into the carriage, and trust to their own repre-

sentations respecting the guilt of the parties, whom they intended then to accuse of having poisoned a relative, a crime viewed by all sects with just indignation.

A struggle now ensued, in which Elinor performed the most active part, by pulling back the ruffians who attempted to raise her friend from the chair, to which Isabella clung and endeavoured to sit heavily, making what might be termed merely a passive resistance.

Though the troop had nearly a mile to return, the distance was quickly passed. "There they are!" screamed Elinor, letting go her hold of the man at whose coat she had been tugging, and running to the window. "Here they are!

Here's Ernest too, I declare! And—

she continued, turning proudly round, look us if they dare!"

and an air of conscious safety, and supreme defiance, in the manner in

which these words were uttered, that the men instantly ceased their efforts—drew back—and stood looking at each other. And it was well for them that they were found thus tranquil on the arrival of the rescuers: for, a moment after, there was heard a sound of rapid footsteps mounting the stairs—then, attempts to open the door, which, as it offered resistance, was instantly beaten in with a loud crash. Charles Randolph rushed across the room, and Isabella, scarcely knowing what she did, sprang up and threw herself upon his neck. The feelings of both were, at first, far too intense for utterance, and there was, for some time, a dead silence, during which the two ruffians sneaked out of the room.

“Do you know, Ernest, they were going to burn me!” exclaimed Elinor, to her protector, whom she had been caressing with all the innocent fondness of childish affection.

“Burn you!” muttered Ernest, and a

dark and deadly scowl overspread his countenance.

"Yes—indeed!" continued she; "but I would have borne it, rather than become an idolater—for I remembered that you told me we must endure even to the end—and I *would*."

"Bless you! bless you, dear, dearest Elinor!" exclaimed the youth, pressing her closely to his bosom; and then, lifting his eyes towards Heaven, he continued, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise!"

Elinor never forgot *that* exclamation. The indirect eulogium went to her heart, and a crimson glow seemed to suffuse itself over her whole frame. She felt happy—very happy—but yet she blushed deeply, and, therefore, wished to change the conversation.

"I'm glad you are a soldier, Ernest," she

said; "it's what I always wished. You are just fit for a soldier, and I know why. But I won't tell you, for fear it should make you proud."

Here they were interrupted by the approach of Isabella and Charles, the latter to receive a small portion of Elinor's caresses, the former to welcome her brother, at whose change of dress she expressed no surprise, for it was as she had long expected it would be. But the poor liberated captive was, indeed, so overwhelmed by the sudden and extraordinary change in her situation, that, though she felt joy, and gladness, and gratitude, even to the verge of painful acuteness, all appeared, for awhile, too like the delirium of a pleasant dream, presenting scenes, from which, if one turns, they are gone for ever. She felt that it was impossible to reflect—and determined not to make the attempt—

she, therefore, gave up her whole soul to the unlooked for rapture of the moment.

Having said thus much of her state of mind, it is needless to describe that of her lover; for it was in perfect accordance, save the glow of exultation which he felt at having been her deliverer, and, perhaps, a trifling regret that neither danger nor difficulty had attended the achievement.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR lovers were roused from their temporary elysium by the appearance of Lieutenant Hermann, who came to inform the captain that the ladies' servants were about to go off with the carriage in which they had arrived. "I took upon myself, however, to stop them, till I knew the ladies' and your pleasure," he added.

A short consultation was held, and the man who boasted that he knew every inch of the road was called in, and the result was, a determination to take the carriage, by a cross-country road, as far as possible towards the army, if not practicable to the camp itself. Charles then gave the command of the troop into the

hands of his lieutenant; and was not a little pleased when Elinor declared she would ride, if they would let her have a horse; "because," she said, roguishly, "I know, Isabella, you'll have something *particular* to say to Charles, and then—but, oh dear! where's Fido. You've got him, haven't you, Charles?"

No sooner was she told that her favourite was below, than the little wild creature, now restored to her usual, or somewhat more than her usual, spirits, rushed out of the room, and ran down stairs, calling "Fido, Fido!" and telling the soldiers to bring him to her directly. The good-tempered fellows were highly amused with her vivacity, and the dog was soon found. Then, it was glorious fun for them to see the meeting; the delighted animal, covered with mud and dust from the morning's journey, soon left visible marks of his attachment on every part of her dress and person; while she, all un-

conscious, or careless about the matter, continued to hug and fondle him as though he had been a lap-dog, just washed, dried, and combed for the drawing-room. Consequently, when the lovers descended, they found their young friend in a sad pickle, and Fido proceeded immediately to bestow similar favours upon Isabella, but was not allowed to go quite such lengths as before, by his master's interference.

Phil, the smith and farrier (now glorying more in the latter title), took upon himself the charge of brushing up Elinor, and attending to all her riding paraphernalia.

"There," said he, to his companions, when she was mounted, "that's what I call something like a girl! only it's a pity she is a girl. Look at her blue eyes! how they sparkle! bless the child! she is'nt going to make the horse leap over the gate? Hollo! ma'amselle! where are you going? that's not the way! by Jove, she's topped it!"

"There, Ernest!" cried the laughing girl, as soon as she had pulled in her horse, "you see I haven't forgot your lessons. We shall gallop all the way, shan't we? I saw how you rode up to the door—that's the way I like to ride."

It is almost needless to say that Elinor soon became a great favourite with the whole troop; and Ernest was not a little gratified to observe the admiration which she had excited.

"If I was a man, Ernest," said she, on their way back to the army, "I would be a soldier. But why shouldn't women be soldiers? I've read of the amazons—they were only women; and as for strength, why that comes from use and exercise. I am as strong again to day as I was yesterday, cooped up in a prison. The heart's all you know, and I don't think they *could* make me afraid *now*."

"Woman may do more than man!" replied Ernest, with his usual vehemence.

“It was not by the strength of her own arm that Deborah conquered, but by *exciting* the children of Israel; and then they awoke, as from slumber, and “jeoparded themselves unto the death,” and “king’s came to the battle,” and “the mighty were overthrown.”

This was not exactly an unpremeditated answer to Elinor’s remark; for Ernest, though he spake but little, allowed nothing to escape his observation, which, in any degree, might possibly affect the great cause to which he had so unreservedly devoted himself. He noticed that the demeanour, the very features of the soldiers seemed changed since the morning; they had, then, rode listlessly, as though they were mere machines or dumb animals, following the direction of their leader, and careless of what might happen; now every man sate his horse and grasped his sword as though he *felt* that he had a duty to perform and a charge to guard; and eyes

that were habitually fixed either upon the ground, or the leading file, were now glancing in all directions, as if in search of an enemy; and when he sought the cause of this change, he read it in the secret tablets of his own heart. It was the presence of his sister and his young companion.

Ernest, according to his wonted custom, pondered upon this, and like most sanguine theorists of his age, imagined that he had made an important discovery, and was fathoming the mysteries and depths of the human heart. Had he overheard what was passing at a short distance, he would have felt there was little reason to plume himself upon superior sagacity.

"Do you mind the fellows?" said Hermann to the cornet, as they were crossing an open field, with the army and river in full view; "one would think they'd been doing something wonderful. See how devilish proud our black-

muzzled serjeant looks! Bright eyes are the best field-pieces, eh, my lad!"

"Ay, ay," observed farrier Phil, "if ever you had cudgelled or wrestled for a prize, you'd know what a precious difference that makes. I was as near as possible being thrown clean upon my back once by a chap whom I'd made sure of. He was changed all of a sudden, and seemed as strong as a horse; and, hang me, if I didn't think there'd been some witchcraft at work, till I happened to catch sight of cherry-cheeked Bess, whom he was after then; and so I knew how it was, for I had felt the same before myself. My eyes! how I used to lay it into 'em whenever my poor wench was looking on!"

The track which the carriage was obliged to follow, had all the usual varieties common in every country to what are called "cross-country roads." Sometimes it was set fast in a bog,

and hauled out by additional horses; and the chances of an upset were very frequent: but still the two inside passengers evinced no disposition to quit their snuggeries, till the lieutenant halted the troop, and rode up to ask his captain if he wouldn't like to take the command on joining the regiment."

"The regiment!" exclaimed Charles, "why it's impossible we can be there yet!"

"There they are, however," replied Hermann, pointing with his sword, "just at the brow of the next hill, not five hundred yards off; and here comes the colonel, walking out to meet us."

The captain instantly alighted and took his post, and the carriage moved forward with its escort.

"What have you got there, captain?" asked the colonel. "A great gingerbread coach! something in it, I suppose? Spanish horses

I'll swear ; ay, ay—and there's some cursed don's coat of arms upon it too, I see. Who's your prisoner ?”

Charles related what had occurred, as briefly as possible ; and the worthy veteran congratulated him most warmly.

“ But hang it, my dear fellow,” he continued, “ I don't know what in the world you'll do with her here. We must contrive to send her over the water somehow, for we shall have a general engagement to-morrow to a certainty.”

“ But there are some ladies with the army already,” observed Charles, to whom the idea of immediate separation was insupportable ; “ surely they can be together ?”

“ Yes,” replied the colonel, “ that's true enough ; but—ahem !—I don't think they'll quite do. I'll make inquiry, however. In the mean while, bring your friends to my quarters ; they mustn't be a moment in *yours*, or it will be

all up. For your married ladies in camp, when they are particular at all, are as particular as I should be if I had to pick the best horse out of ten thousand. There mustn't be a blemish nor a whisper: so mind, you mustn't be alone with her a moment till I come back. I have my eye upon one lady, who I think will do, if we can persuade her."

Charles expressed his thanks, and then introduced Isabella to his commanding officer, who, after seeing the party to his quarters, which were established in a small cottage, or rather a hut, departed on his friendly mission. A soldier's wife was then procured to wait on the young ladies, and Charles contrived to keep Ernest in the room, in order that he might, without offence, be still in the presence of Isabella. This task was not difficult, for the young enthusiast listened attentively to his sister's account of the inquisitorial proceedings, cherishing all he heard,

as fresh fuel, to keep up the ardour of his spirit.

In the mean while, Elinor, selecting Phil for her cicerone, and delighted with the novelty of the scene, was running to and fro in all directions, and asking a thousand questions concerning the use of every thing that met her eye. The farrier strutted about with his young charge, as proudly as though she had been his own child, while the huge dog kept close to her on the other side, apparently inflated with little less of self-importance.

"Your colonel is a good man, isn't he?" asked Elinor.

"Yes," replied Phil, "and a brave man too."

"Then I think I shall like him," said she; "but I'm not quite pleased with him *now*, because he hasn't made Ernest an officer. I don't understand *that*, for I'm sure he's just as fit to be a captain as Charles."

"Yes," observed her guide, "but you must recollect he only joined the regiment the other day."

"No matter for that," said Elinor, tossing back her head; "I shall speak to the colonel about it, for I'm sure there isn't a braver man among you all than Ernest; no, nor *half* so brave either."

"Here comes the colonel," exclaimed Phil, "and a lady with him. Let's get out of their way."

"Not I," replied she; "I'll get out of nobody's way. We're doing nothing we need be ashamed of, I hope—if I thought we were I wouldn't be here."

"This is one of the young people," said the colonel, as he approached; and then, stepping forward, he took Elinor by the hand, and presented her to the Countess of Birkenback. "This lady, my dear," he continued, "has

kindly consented to take you and your friend under her protection."

"Protection!" exclaimed Elinor, "I don't understand that. We are in no danger now—and if we were, there's Ernest, and Charles, and here's Fido to protect us."

"Very true, my dear," observed the countess, smiling, "and I'll add myself to the number, if you please."

"Well, that's very kind of you to be sure," said Elinor, smiling in her turn; "but what could you do more than Isabella or me? You are not a soldier."

"The colonel, fearing her brusque manner of speaking might give offence, here interfered, and told her that the Count Birkenback, the lady's husband, was an officer of very high rank and had great power in the army.

This changed Elinor's tone immediately.

"Oh," she said, "that alters the case;"

and approaching the countess, she held out a hand, and looked attentively in her face. The pledge of friendship was taken and warmly pressed by that of her patroness.

“And is your husband a very brave man?” she asked.

“Yes, my love, he is, and a very good man,” was the reply.

“Then I know I shall like him,” continued Elinor; “I love brave people.”

“I’m sure you’ll be good friends,” said the countess.

“I hope so,” replied Elinor; “but the colonel says he has a great deal of power; and if he has, I know *what* he must do if he expects to make friends with *me*.”

By this time they were walking, hand-in-hand, towards the colonel’s quarters.

“And what may that be, my dear?” asked the countess, kindly.

"He must make Ernest an officer," was the reply.

"You shall speak to him about it," said the countess. "But who is Ernest?"

"Don't you know him?" exclaimed Elinor; "he belongs to the army now, and is what they call a volunteer; but that's nothing I find. He ought to have a great many men to command; for, oh! he is so brave—so brave—you cannot think."

"Well," said the countess, "you shall introduce him to me, and we will see what can be done. He is your brother, I suppose."

"No," replied Elinor, "not *exactly*; but he is a very par-ti-cu-lar friend of mine."

While the good lady was smiling at the warmth of the young advocate for her friend's promotion, the colonel informed her that they were at the door of his splendid mansion.

The Countess of Birkenback was tall,

of fair complexion, about fifty years of age, and her every look, word, and motion, indicated what is termed the complete gentlewoman. There was a peculiar mildness in her manner of speaking, and in the somewhat faded lustre of her languid blue eyes. She had been handsome, and the remains of beauty were yet left; but the loss of two sons, her only children, in "the service," had imprinted a melancholy expression on her countenance, over which the smile of kindness and benevolence frequently played, but passed away, like the transient gleams of sunshine, in a cloudy winter's day, without any cheering influence, leaving all cold and desolate beneath. The count, her husband, was some ten years older than herself, and had followed the various fortunes of the late emperor, Charles the Fifth, through all parts of Europe, and even in his disastrous expedition against Algiers. He was what army men style

a "martinette." Buckles, buttons, sashes, and sword-knots, must all be placed and kept according to the "regulation," or he pronounced the wearer to be "no soldier;" and his temper was consequently, just now, grievously tried by the heterogeneous materials of which the Prince's army was composed. In person he was tall, spare, and upright as a lance; and, when off duty, though there appeared something rigid, there was a pleasing suavity in his manners and countenance; which, however, all vanished when on the parade, where his features, as far as expression was concerned, might as well have been carved in wood. Nassau was his country, and he had been enabled greatly to add to the extent of his paternal estate; but those on whose account he most valued the accession were now gone, and rendered property of little value in his eyes. Heroes and military men, he considered, were entitled, most un-

doubtedly, to hold the first place in general esteem, admiration, and respect. After them, he believed the greatest man that ever lived was Martin Luther, whom Strada (the Jesuit historian of the war in Flanders) calls "the pest of his own and succeeding ages."

It was a marvel to the count, how an obscure priest could stir up the people with his voice, as with the sound of a trumpet, and send the defiance echoing to the walls of Rome. There must, he felt certain, be something extraordinary in the man and his doctrines, and he was determined to examine closely into the matter; but study and reading were little consonant with his habits, and he, perhaps, never would have come to a decision, but for the furious persecutions which arose in the Netherlands, and in England. To relieve the oppressed was, he considered, one of the most glorious duties of his glorious profession; and no tyranny could

equal that of which he received daily evidence, from the poor Flemish refugees, who were continually escaping from their bleeding country, leaving property and friends behind, to avoid the most cruel of deaths. He forthwith pronounced him who impiously styled himself "the vicegerent of God," to be no other than the vicegerent of the devil ; and, consequently, became a Protestant, with the resolution that his protest should be written with the sword.

The Prince of Orange's expedition afforded him a prospect of fulfilling this resolve, and he tendered his services, which were gladly accepted by a general long acquainted with his military talents and experience. That the countess should wish to accompany him was a thing utterly out of his calculations, and he endeavoured much to dissuade her from the attempt ; but her motives, though far different from those of her husband, were not less strong, nor was

her resolution less steadfast. For some years she had enacted the part of the bountiful lady, in her own neighbourhood, visiting the sick and the afflicted, and administering to their necessities; and her knowledge of medicine was spoken highly of, in those days, when regular practitioners were not quite so numerous as at present. The presence of a person so qualified, and possessed of the influence attached to rank, would, she judged, in all probability, tend much to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and wounded. For wishing success to the cause itself, for its *own* sake, she could give much better reasons than the count himself; for she had examined her grounds of belief in the doctrines of the reformed religion much more closely. His spirit breathed vengeance against its enemies; hers offered up prayers for its friends.

Such were their respective feelings when

leaving home, the ties of attachment to which were alike severed for both: but it must be confessed that, the countess frequently wished it were possible to transport herself, for a few hours, to the scenes of her benevolence, just to see how her poor patients and pensioners were going on in her absence. And sometimes, when the count was engaged in his military duties during the greater part of the day, and she was left alone and inactive, while she knew her presence might be useful elsewhere, she felt disposed to question whether she had not mistaken the path of duty. But, the fact was, she had no society. There was no female with the army in whose company she could feel at home, nor with whom she could associate with confidence; and consequently *ennui*, that tormentor of the active when doomed to a state of idleness, was making rapid inroads upon her wonted tranquillity, when Colonel Houlon announced the

arrival of the orphans. There was enough of interest in their story and situation to have made them welcome at any time, and the countess hesitated not a moment in deciding that her home should be theirs ; for, although she felt a certain degree of esteem for Colonel Houlon, and he no longer could be called a young man, he was still a widower ; and, moreover, she had sometimes seen him talking familiarly with persons of the lower class, in a manner which appeared to her not a little inconsistent with his rank.

The meeting between her and Isabella was such as might be expected where the offers of active benevolence are received and acknowledged with sincere gratitude. Charles added his warmest thanks, and Ernest prayed that, if she had any private sorrows, the Almighty would pour balm into the wound, and anoint her with the oil of gladness. An exclamation

to that effect burst suddenly from him, after he had long been silently examining her features, with an intenseness which would have made a younger person blush, and which caused her to feel somewhat uneasy and prejudiced against the youth for his rudeness. Struck, however, with the enthusiasm of his manner, she, in her turn, commenced a scrutiny; and her experienced eye read a strong conflict of dark and contending passions in his lowering brow and pallid countenance; and she felt deeply interested respecting him.

Without further delay, the whole party adjourned to the quarters of the count, who received his Maria's new friends with unfeigned pleasure, arising partly from natural goodness of heart, but principally on account of the acquisition which he felt their society would be to her, who now, even as in the spring of life, possessed his undivided affection.

As Isabella was now under the protection of a married lady, of high rank, and unblemished character, the lovers felt at liberty to consult their own inclinations. The evening was calm, cool, and inviting, such as lovers love most when together—the breezes were refreshing, but gentle and salutary—fanning the cheek, yet scarcely ruffling the hair of beauty. Your cold, clear, windy moonlight nights, are most excellent for a solitary lover, who may gaze, and soliloquize, and apostrophize the pale orb, on which, perchance, the eyes of his distant mistress are then fixed, even as though it were placed there for them alone, like a raquet, to send their glances rebounding from one to the other. All this may be very well *alone*: but, unless the reader should happen to be smitten with a New Zealand or a Lapland Venus, we strongly recommend him to keep her within doors on such nights; for lovers are seldom apt

to walk fast enough to keep the poor body in a glow commensurate with that of the heart. And from such strolls, colds, coughs, and consumptions, with a long train of ills, have too frequently taken their rise, as turbulent rivers from clear and trickling springs.

The evening in question was of another description; and Isabella and Charles walked alone through the multitude, and went forth from among the host, and ascended, by a gentle slope, to an eminence which commanded a view of the winding river, and the picturesque and romantic scenery on its banks. They glided to and fro, arm in arm, and hand in hand, heart mingling with heart, and lips ever striving—but vainly striving, to express, in adequate language, the depth and fulness of present happiness. Those who have known such hours, will ever after, find them like “visions of glory, pouring on the soul.” Amid the rankling cares and bustling

scenes of afterlife, the memory of them comes, ever and anon, like sweet music, or a perfumed gale, "redolent of spring;" and, even in old age, it is pleasant to reflect that we "*have* been blest."

While our lovers were thus engaged, Elinor was left alone with her new protectors, who were highly delighted with the novelty of having any thing so gay and giddy about them.

The count admired her spirit, and could not avoid joining in Phil's wish that she had been a boy; yet it is a question whether he would not then have called that rudeness, which, as matters were, he attributed only to a high flow of spirits, and the unchecked outpourings of an innocent and affectionate heart. It is not to be supposed that she forgot to speak of Ernest's promotion.

"I'll see what I can do, my love," said the veteran; and he cast a look of inquiry towards the countess, who replied,

“ Ernest is Mademoiselle Freron’s brother, who was here just now, and whom you took by the arm and led aside as he was going out.”

“ I am glad to hear it,” said the count, and drawing Elinor towards him, he placed her on his knee, and continued,—“ and so you really wish that Ernest should be an officer ?”

“ Yes, I do wish it,” Elinor answered, “ because I know he deserves it; and you’d say so too, if you knew him as well as I do.”

“ Well, my love,” said the count, smiling, “ I have the pleasure to tell you that I do say so now.”

“ I don’t understand that,” exclaimed Elinor. “ I’m afraid you are making game of me. I thought you didn’t know him before just now ?”

“ I was not aware that his name was Ernest,” replied the count, “ but I have observed his

conduct. He was the young volunteer of whom I spoke to you this morning, Maria.

The countess, to whom the latter words were addressed, expressed much gratification at this intelligence.

"What did he do?" cried Elinor, "tell me; do pray tell me! I know it was something very brave and very good."

"You are right, my dear," replied the veteran. "It was both. He saved two poor fellows from being drowned in the river; but I had some difficulty in finding him out, for, as soon as they were safe, he slunk away without stopping to receive thanks."

"That's just like him," exclaimed Elinor, clapping her hands; "he never likes to be thanked for any thing. Well—you'll make him an officer *now*—won't you?"

"Yes, my love," replied the count, "and you shall take him his commission to-morrow morning, if you get up early enough."

“ Oh, God bless you ! God bless you ! ” cried the enraptured child ; “ give me a kiss, pray ! I do love you so now ! I ’ ll set up all night and then I shall be sure to be ready . ”

The count and countess here exchanged a glance, and read each other’s thoughts and feelings.

“ I ’ m very foolish , ” continued Elinor, taking out her pocket handkerchief. “ I do declare I ’ m crying—and yet I ’ m so very glad—and so very happy. It ’ s really quite ridiculous . ” And she strove to laugh. “ I can ’ t think what ’ s come to me. I was very well just now . ”

“ Yes, my dear Maria , ” said the count, in reply to a significant glance which the good lady threw towards his writing-desk, “ she will get no sleep otherwise . ”

The countess immediately rose, and put upon the table pens and ink, and paper, and a small packet of blank commissions, which the

prince had placed at the disposal of his old comrade, to reward distinguished merit.

"I must write a short note, my dear," said the count, rising, and gently disengaging himself from his young friend, "and then I'll come and talk to you again."

As soon as he was seated at the table, the child went up to the countess, and was beginning to chatter, but was told, in a whisper, that they must be silent now, as the count did not like to have any talking while he was writing.

"Then," she replied, in the same tone, "I won't speak a word, for I won't do any thing he doesn't like, because I do love him so." And she sat quietly down upon a stool, leaning on the knee of the countess, and looking alternately at her new friends.

"Who waits there?" said the count, when he had filled up one of the commissions and en-

closed it in an envelope. The summons was immediately answered, and he ordered a corporal's guard to be instantly in attendance. He then beckoned his young friend to come to him, and continued, "This packet contains the appointment we were talking of."

"For Ernest?" she exclaimed, "Oh! give it me and I'll run with it directly!"

"Stop a moment, my dear," said the veteran, "there will be a guard to conduct you presently. Young ladies must not run about here by themselves. Your friend is now an ensign, and I dare say, before long, he will be much higher; but we have rules in the army that must be strictly attended to."

"What is an ensign?" asked Elinor, "It is a post of great honour," replied the count.

"He will have to take charge of the colours, and it is the greatest disgrace that can happen

to a regiment to have them taken by the enemy."

"They'll never take them away from *him*," said Elinor, proudly, at the same time thrusting the letter carefully into her bosom; "and if they were, I'd never speak to him again, though I do love him so much, and I'll tell him so too. But there's no occasion for that neither—"

"There's the guard, my dear," said the count, interrupting her, and taking her by the hand, he led her to the door, and delivered her into the charge of the corporal, with instructions where to conduct her.

In the short conversation which had passed between Ernest and the count, the latter had merely expressed his approbation and thanks for the occurrence of the morning, and assured the youth that he should not forget the circumstance, nor neglect any thing in his power to forward his promotion; and he had mentally

appropriated for him the commission now sent, but intended, ere conferring it, to have made further inquiry into the youth's character and connexions. Ernest was gratified at having obtained a powerful friend, and gave way for a short time, to wild imaginings of future greatness; but he soon checked himself with the reflection, that it was wrong to put his trust in man, and betook himself to reading the Holy Volume, which was his constant companion. The events of the day, and the course of his own thoughts during the ride home, led him to turn to various passages wherein the influence of woman is recorded. He read of Deborah, of Judith, and of Esther; and then laying down the book, he sank into a reverie concerning his sister and her young friend. Had it not been for his attachment to Isabella, he thought Charles Randolph would now have been dwelling quietly in England. For himself, certainly,

the case appeared different; yet he was obliged to confess that even the presence of a child had a powerful influence over him. Elinor was a child, a mere child—it seemed but the other day that he had carried her in his arms, and taught her to read and write—but then there was no one he loved better—and so he endeavoured by pondering the matter over, to discover *why* the child was so dear to him, since it was impossible to account for the fact on similar principles with those which would very well apply to the cases of King Ahasuerus and Charles Randolph.

He was “mystifying” himself with his ratiocinations, when the little subject of them bounced into the room, leaped upon him, and threw her arms round his neck.

“Here, Ernest,” she exclaimed, “I have got a commission for you! you are to take care of the colours, and *all* depends upon them. I told the count *you’d* never let them be taken;

and I know you *won't*, neither, because if you do—why—I'll never give you such a kiss as this again. What's the matter with you? you're not going to cry—are you? I was crying just now, like a great fool as I was—I'm sure I don't know why now—for we've got such good friends. The count and countess are *so* good—and I'll tell you what he told me. He said that *that* was all he could do *at present*; but that you'd *very* soon, be *much* higher, and he would keep his eye upon you. But why didn't you tell me about your saving those two mens' lives this morning? It was very naughty of you—but, mind, *after this*, you must always tell me *every thing* you do—*all*—all about it, and I know you'll never do any thing you need be ashamed of."

"I hope, by the help of the Almighty!" exclaimed the youth, "that I never shall—but—but I am ashamed of this weakness!" and, un-

able to say more, he hid his face with his hands, to conceal his emotion. Whether this paroxysm of feeling was caused by the unexpected placing of the colours into his keeping on the eve of a general engagement, or the display of fond affection on the part of the *child*, he was unable to determine in a manner satisfactory to himself, but he was resolved to attribute it to the former. The reader will form his own judgment.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Isabella was about to retire for the night, the countess told her not to be alarmed at the unusual noises which she would probably hear, as the army was about to move forward, and the prince intended to offer battle to the enemy on the morrow. The probability of such an event had been carefully concealed from her by Charles, and the information now filled her with a thousand apprehensions. Elinor, on the contrary, seemed animated by childish delight, and hoped they should be near enough to see all that passed, as she had long wished to see a real battle; and she inquired if the wicked king would be there.

"No, my dear, he is in Spain," replied the countess, "that is his native country, and he always preferred it to this."

"Then he is a coward," said Elinor, "to stay at home, and send other people to fight for him."

"I can't say, indeed, my love," observed the countess, "what he is, except that he is a cruel and hardhearted man;" and then, turning to Isabella, she continued, "I should recommend you either to remain here or to cross to the other side of the river. I think, at all events, it will be better to send your carriage over, as then, if we should meet with a reverse, I shall take care that you have early intelligence, and you will have the means of escape."

"Escape! Reverse!" murmured Isabella. "You surely do not apprehend any thing of that sort! Charles spoke so confidently."

"It was natural," replied the countess, "but

it is our duty to be prepared for either event. I likewise feel confidence. For, if ever man could safely appeal to his Maker in self-justification of his motives for unsheathing the sword, we may venture so to do at the present moment. But the issues of life and death are in his hands; and it is our duty to act with prudence. Our enemy is able, powerful, and vigilant."

"And you yourself, madam," inquired Isabella, *you* proceed with the army?"

"You know my motives," replied the countess, "I believe I may be useful."

"Then, if you will permit me," said Isabella, firmly, "I will accompany you."

"Yes," cried Elinor, "we will all go together."

"Consult your pillow, dear Isabella," said the countess, mildly, "we can decide in the morning. Good night—good night!" and she left her *protégées* to their repose.

Long ere the dawn of the succeeding day, sounds of "busy preparation" were heard in all directions; and before sunrise the whole army was in motion. Isabella had not wavered in her resolution, and the firmness with which she repeated it, raised her highly in the opinion of the countess.

"I have reflected," said the orphan, "and I trust that you will not find us a useless incumbrance. We are here with the only protectors we have on earth. Wherefore and whither should we fly? Our home and our duties are here."

"Yes," cried Elinor, "that's settled. And when we marry, we'll have brave soldiers for husbands. Won't we, Isabella?"

When the army arrived before the intrenchments of the Duke of Alva, they were found much too strong to render any attempt justifiable. This was a grievous disappointment to

all stout hearts ; and the Germans, who had refused to march on the preceding day, became the subject of general execration.

The prince drew up his forces in battle array, and strove, by every means, to induce his adversary to enter the field. But all efforts were vain, as the wary Spaniard had now decided on a safer and more certain plan of action, than risking all upon the hazard of a single engagement. He well knew the limited nature of the prince's resources for the payment of his troops, and had already been informed of the insubordination of his German auxiliaries.

The details of the short campaign which ensued would prove exceedingly tedious to the reader, as it consisted merely in marches, to and fro, each army watching the motions of its adversary, and now and then coming into partial collision. The only success which the Duke of Alva could boast of, was at the river Geete ;

where, having attacked the rear-guard of the enemy's army, he killed some and put the rest to flight. The Prince of Orange had the same ground of triumph in an action at Quesnoy; where, having come up with a detachment consisting of ten companies of German Catholics, eight of Spaniards, and three troops of light-armed infantry, he put them to the rout, and took ample vengeance for the loss he had sustained at Geete."*

However unimportant such a mode of warfare might appear towards the achievement of the great end in view, it frequently afforded an opportunity for the exertion and display of individual talent and bravery. Ever in the field, and in the vicinity of the enemy, our young military aspirants thus became practically acquainted with various details and duties, the

* Thuanus.—See Watson's *History of Philip II.*

knowledge of which is not less necessary in their profession than personal courage itself.

Count Birkenback took Ernest under his especial protection. The romantic ardour of the youth interested and pleased him, and he would frequently lecture him, by the hour, on the principles and science of "stratagematics"—fighting all his battles o'er again, and describing, with pen and paper, how they had been won—where the enemy had left a weak point, or neglected to avail themselves of some advantageous spot on or near the field. The young ensign, who panted to be a commander, "a leader of the host of the Lord against the enemies of his people," listened attentively, and often delighted his hoary instructor by the aptitude of his remarks and questions.

"That is a most extraordinary and promising youth," he said one evening to the countess: "he will rise—he must rise—for his whole soul

is in his profession. I'm only afraid he'll get knocked on the head in some of these petty skirmishes; for I understand he's always the foremost, though I have told him a thousand times that no man can be fit for a command who is not cool as well as brave."

"But, my dear count," replied his good lady, smiling, "remember his age. I can recollect once being well acquainted with a young officer to whom the same lessons were repeated with very little effect—and, only eleven years since, when the Duke of Savoy allowed Count Egmont to lead on the cavalry at St. Quentin, that same officer, though no longer very young, did, I am told—"

"You've a good memory Maria," said the veteran, affectionately interrupting her, "but I verily believe that it was more your fault than mine."

"I found no fault," observed the countess,

"for I really believed I loved him the better for it—if possible."

"You're a sad flatterer, Maria," said the countess; "but this young fellow has no such plea. It is only religious fury and enthusiasm towards a cause for which he should reserve himself, till his services can be more efficacious than knocking down an odd man or two. His character for personal courage is already sufficiently established, and he has no fair lady's smiles to win."

"I am not quite sure of that," observed the countess, smiling significantly: "we women take more notice of trifles than you lords of the creation, who are ever occupied in important matters. I think that I have discovered something, of which, perhaps, he is not himself aware. What say you if his fair mistress should be no other than your little favourite?"

"What! Elinor? the child?" exclaimed

"the young, handsome," "Al. my dear Maria! they are no more like brother and sister; too much together. Al. in that's quite out of the question. She sits in his arms and prattles to him as if he was her father or sister brother—al. careless, thoughtless, and free. That's not the way of commandment. If I recollect right, that she's such a mere child, and."

"Well, well," observed the countess, "time will tell. But I think I'm not mistaken."

The worthy veteran, reserved in his own offspring, found that he had a spare corner in his heart for a young friend, and it was not long ere the little lady Elmar took complete possession of it. She would sit and listen to his tales of his campaigns with the most profound attention, and beg him to repeat such as were her especial favorites. It was a droll thing to see a man of his high military rank so employed in the midst of warfare: but it was a

great alleviation, under existing circumstances, for him thus easily to escape from brooding over the thousand petty vexations which beset him, in consequence of the insubordination of the troops.

In the mean while, Isabella's life was one of constant excitement—alternately between the most perfect happiness when her lover was present, and extreme uneasiness whenever he was absent for a few hours. Charles earnestly pressed her, now all obstacles were removed, to consent to their marriage; but she shrunk from the idea of such publicity as must attend the ceremony while with the army. At length, however, he extorted from her a promise, that it should only be delayed till they were in winter quarters.

Such was the state of affairs with our little party of lovers and friends when the month of October arrived, and desertions became frequent

throughout the army. No large town had been taken, nor declared openly in favour of their cause; the men were dispirited; the prospect of passing the winter in the open fields was too gloomy to be endured by the hirelings, and even Colonel Houlon's regiment was visibly thinned. Scarcely a day passed without men and horses being found missing, and forage and provisions were procured with extreme difficulty. The judicious policy of the Duke of Alva now became too apparent. The people of the country were held in terror, and panic-struck, and the invading army was dwindling away for want of resources.

"We must go farther afield," said Colonel Houlon one evening to Captain Randolph, "we must beat new ground. The horses can't, nor shan't, be pinched in this way, as long as I have the command. I have just got intelligence of a rick about four miles off that I'm deter-

mined to have a cut at. We may have a brush by the way—but the horses can't starve. What say you? will you make one?"

"Certainly," replied Captain Charles; "how can you ask the question?"

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed the poor colonel; "I know I need not, and really hardly knew what I said; but we are all so altered now, that I expect every body to put some difficulty in the way of duty."

"What time shall we move?" asked Charles.

"Be ready by daybreak," was the reply. "I've a countryman as guide, and one of our men knows the country nearly as well. We shall have another troop, as well as yours, and I'll go with you, for I'm tired of doing nothing."

When the morning came, the captain mustered his troop. "There are six men missing since last night, horses and all," whispered Lieutenant Hermann; "but I wouldn't take any

notice of it, as it might only put the others out of spirits."

"You are strong yet, I see," observed the colonel, riding up, "but I've been obliged to order out *two* skeletons, instead of *one* whole troop, to join us. Well, well, those that remain *must* be the best, that's one comfort, and we've quite enough for this bout."

When they were about two miles from the camp, the colonel pointed out a hollow in the road to which a detachment of infantry were then on the march by the count's orders, to support them in case of necessity.

"I told him there was no occasion," he continued, "but the old boy is as cautious as a fox. So, if we should be separated, you'll know which way to make for. We turn off at that red house on the brow beyond."

They reached the spot where the rick stood without any obstacle, and all hands were soon

briefly employed in cutting and stowing away the welcome provender, while the officers kept a sharp look-out to prevent a surprise. The work was nearly accomplished when Charles exclaimed, "To horse! to horse!"

"What do you see?" cried the colonel.

"Nothing," was the reply; "but I heard a trampling of horses' feet in that direction;" and he pointed towards a gently-sloping eminence, about a quarter of a mile distant, and a little to the left of the track by which they had arrived.

"Then we must be betrayed," said the colonel, "for I was there not five minutes since, and the country is open beyond, and there wasn't a thing in the valley but an old barn."

"Where's the guide?" exclaimed Hermann; but no answer was made, and it seemed that he had slipped off during the previous bustle.

"Form here, my lads!" cried the colonel, "let us have elbow-room!" and the line was

immediately drawn up on the turf, while Charles galloped toward the eminence to reconnoitre, but returned instantly.

"Steady, my lads!" said the colonel. "Draw swords. I hope we're going to have some sport. Well, captain, are they coming? What are they like?"

"Cavalry," replied Charles, "something like ourselves, perhaps a few more, but of course I'd no time to count;" and he took his place.

"Here they come over the brow," exclaimed the colonel, "Spaniards, I see. We must bear up to the left a little, and not give them the advantage of higher ground. By Jove! the fools are coming down into the valley."

Hermann here rode up to the colonel, and keeping his back to the men, said, in a low voice, "there's another party in our rear—it's a regular ambuscade."

"Don't say a word," whispered the colonel,

“but take your place,” and then, turning round, he continued, in a loud voice, “a very just observation, lieutenant! Yes, we’ll have a dash at them while they’re dressing, and see if the horses won’t take care of their victuals. Forward!”

The trampling of their own steeds prevented our troopers from hearing the advance of the enemy in their rear, who now pressed forward with eager haste; but as they were yet at some distance, and had several hedges to encounter, the colonel calculated that they could not arrive in time to prevent him from cutting his way through their comrades. The crash was well sustained by the Spanish soldiers, but the last words the veteran shouted, ere they met, were “Spur your horses right over them! Don’t look behind, nor stop to take prisoners!”

The consequence was another proof of his judgment in his favourite study. The Spanish

horses had not been so well selected; and in spite of the bravery of their riders, were borne down by superior strength and weight.

“Hurra! my lads!” shouted the veteran.
“Bravo! now let the Dons pick one another up, and we’ll take our prog home. Forward! forward!”

They had proceeded but a very short distance, ere that part of the enemy which had not been engaged, were in full pursuit, and were followed by those of their comrades who had rallied after the charge. The situation of our troopers was now critical; but it was a great matter to have got the start, and though they rounded the red house in some confusion, they reached the valley beyond, ere they were overtaken. The infantry fell back to let them pass, and then fired upon the Spaniards as they came up, and thereby caused a momentary check, of which the colonel availed himself, and was soon pre-

pared to act again on the defensive. In the meanwhile the infantry were exposed to a most unequal conflict, and were suffering severely. Ernest, who was of the party, exerted himself with his usual reckless bravery, and drew a cry of admiration even from the Spanish commander, who called out to him, for Heaven's sake, to give up his sword, and ordered his men to spare the brave lad. All, however, was in vain, and he continued to fight, with the fury of a madman, till he fell insensible.

Colonel Houlon now advanced to the rescue, and commanded the infantry to disentangle themselves as they could, and form in the rear ; an order which was obeyed as promptly as circumstances would admit. He then gave the command for a retreat ; and the Spanish major, who had already ventured nearer to the enemy's camp, than his instructions warranted, con-

tented himself with remaining in possession of the field.

“ I am afraid you are sadly hurt, Captain Randolph,” said the colonel. “ Tie a handkerchief round your arm, my good fellow, or you’ll feel the loss of that blood by and by. Give me leave—there—that will stop it for the present. It’s well it’s no worse. But you must learn to be merry and wise. There’s moderation in all things. I thought you and Phil were going to take the whole business into your own hands. What in the world could induce you to dash right into the thick of them, just now, as you did ? Why—there wasn’t a man of us near you but him, for I don’t know how long.”

“ Oh God ! ” groaned Charles, “ Ernest, my dear young friend ! ”

“ I didn’t know it was his company,” said the colonel, mournfully, and he remained silent for some minutes, for a glance at the ranks of

the infantry] told him what had happened. He then endeavoured to afford consolation to his young comrade, by some common-place remarks; but soon perceived their inefficacy, and respected his grief too much to persevere.

On examination it appeared that the captain had been struck by a ball in the bridle arm, by which the bone was severely shattered above the elbow, and the same unlucky limb had received a sabre wound lower down.

"The bridle arm is always in for it," exclaimed the colonel; "I never was touched anywhere else, except when I got scored on the head, and once when I had my leg broke by a tumble-down horse. Never mind, my dear fellow, you can ride as well as ever, only you mustn't dash it quite so much. I'll get a cradle made for your arm, that will keep all steady."

Little cared poor Charles for his own condition—for his mind was dwelling upon the

dreadful intelligence which he must bear to Isabella. From the confusion which existed at the moment Ernest fell, it was extremely difficult to ascertain any particulars; but one soldier declared that he saw him knocked down by a blow with the butt end of a pistol. Snatching, therefore, at this small ground for hope, Charles resolved to say that he had fallen into the hands of the enemy, though, from the situation in which he last saw his young friend, it was extremely difficult to conceive how he could have escaped destruction.

A strong detachment, in the meanwhile, had been sent out to the spot where the affair happened, in order to bring in the wounded; but Ernest was not of the number, nor was he among the slain. Then the captain felt some hope himself, and was therefore better able to impart it to others. He found Isabella sitting alone—the countess having gone to attend to

the comfortable accommodation of the poor fellows who had been just brought in ; but she concealed her real business from her young friend, as she knew that some of the men belonged to Colonel Houlon's regiment. Isabella started and turned pale when her lover entered with his arm in a sling.

"It's nothing, dear Isabella," he said, smiling faintly, "and therefore I came myself, lest, if the report reached you, you might suppose it of a serious nature."

"Don't deceive me, Charles," she exclaimed, in a tremulous tone, while her lips quivered convulsively.

"I would not indeed, my love," replied the captain, taking a seat by her side. "It's a mere scratch, but the doctors will have their way. We have been out foraging this morning, and had what the colonel calls a bit of a brush, with a troop of the Spanish cavalry."

Isabella, heroine as she thought herself, and had sometimes appeared on more trying occasions, was not a heroine at all hours, and now the feelings of the woman were predominant. She took the right hand of her lover, pressed it to her heart, and then laid her head upon his shoulder and wept.

As she conceived the whole to be an affair of cavalry, she had not made any inquiry after her brother, and Charles felt it impossible now to introduce his name. "I didn't think," she exclaimed, endeavouring to stifle her emotion—"I *could* not think that I should have been so weak—so foolish. It is what I have daily, almost hourly, expected, and—yet—you must forgive me, Charles."

"Forgive you, dearest Isabella!" he exclaimed, clasping her to his breast. "Oh—take care—your arm—mind your arm!" she cried.

At this moment the countess entered. There

was a mournful expression on her countenance, like that of the bearer of sad tidings. Charles and Isabella rose to receive her, and the latter, now in the presence of a third person, appeared to have undergone a sudden change, and once more to have assumed the heroine. Her arm was passed through that of the captain, and as she leaned upon him, and looked at the countess, her eyes sparkled with a fulness of triumphant delight, for she felt at that moment proud of having bestowed her heart upon one who had proved himself worthy.

The countess, with her usual tact, immediately inferred that she was ignorant of her brother's fate, and, assuming an air of gaiety, advanced and held out her hand to Charles, saying, "When a soldier has only one hand to use, it is an honour for any woman to take it. You must look well after him now, Isabella, for a young officer, with his arm in a sling, is not to

be trusted anywhere, I assure you. You have, however, escaped very easily, Captain Randolph," she continued, again looking grave. "Some of the poor fellows are sadly—sadly—" (here Charles gave her a significant glance)—"but we mustn't talk of that—it is the fortune of war. Let us see you in the evening. The count was inquiring for you just now."

Considering this hint as a signal for dismissal, Charles took leave, and the countess following him a few steps under the pretext of having a message to send to her husband, told him that she would undertake to break the melancholy tidings to Isabella.

Count Birkenback was deeply affected by the loss of his young and promising pupil. "It is," said he, "most unfortunate; since, in all probability, it is the last time that he would have had any opportunity of exposing himself, as our cause must, for the present, be abandoned."

“Will it not be possible,” asked Charles, “to ascertain where he really is?”

“I trust so,” replied the count, “and have some faint hope of effecting his exchange: but I must not attempt to flatter either you or myself. He is a native of the country, and, moreover, on the list of the proscribed, towards whom the duke shows no mercy. I am, however, personally acquainted with several of the Spanish officers, and from them we may expect to hear something of our brave young friend.”

The good countess, in the meanwhile, proceeded as warily as possible in the fulfilment of her painful task; but Isabella soon caught the alarm. “Tell me,” said she, “at once, is he dead?”

“No, indeed,” replied the countess; “we have every reason to believe that he escaped with merely a slight contusion, which rendered him insensible for a short time and thus placed him

in the power of the Spaniards. We shall, no doubt, hear of, or from him, tomorrow, as the count means to write to one of his old comrades who is now in the Duke of Alva's army."

"If you will permit me," said Isabella, rising, "I will retire to my chamber and pray for strength of mind and a submissive spirit—for, indeed, this is hard to be endured."

"Peace be with you, my dear!" sighed the countess, as her young friend left the room.

Elinor soon after came rushing wildly in, exclaiming, "Tell me! tell me! is it true? I don't believe it! They say Ernest is taken prisoner! I can't believe it."

"Sit down, my dear child," said the countess; "do not alarm yourself in this manner! Suppose he was taken prisoner, what then?"

"Then he is not taken?" exclaimed Elinor.

"I dare not say so, my love," replied the countess; "but, if he is, such circumstances

occur every day in the war. He will be kindly treated, and you will soon see him again."

"The poor girl stood, gazing vacantly, and motionless as a statue. "It's very strange!" she said, at length, "I can't cry now! I feel choked!—But—where are the colours?"

"Ernest has, for some time, ceased to carry them," was the reply.

The count entered at the moment the question was asked, and seating himself, drew his little favourite towards him and embraced her with unusual fondness. "Yes, my dear Elinor," he said, "the colours are safe, and our friend, instead of losing any honour, stands higher than ever in the esteem of all, for the bravery of his conduct; but, numbers were too much in favour of the enemy."

"Yet—he surrendered? He gave up his sword?" gasped Elinor. "I thought—I thought he never would!"

"Nor did he," said the count, and then related the circumstances.

"Oh—oh"—exclaimed the poor girl, convulsively. "Yes, that was like him—I *do* think I shall be able to cry *now*. Yes, they are coming. Ha, ha! I thought *he* never would surrender!" and she found relief in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Look to that brave young fellow!" said the Spanish commanding officer, as soon as he was left in quiet possession of the scene of action. "Where is he wounded?"

"Every where, I think, by the look of him," replied a serjeant, lifting up the lifeless body, around which a little group was immediately formed.

"He grasps his sword firm, however," said one.

"What a scowl he has!" exclaimed another.

"Set him upright against the bank, and fetch some water," cried the major, alighting. "Yes," he continued, after feeling the pulse, "there's

life yet! We must save him if we can. He's well worth a little trouble."

They then proceeded to loosen his clothes, and examine the injuries he had received; and, ere long, signs of life became apparent; he opened his eyes for a moment, and then sank again into a stupor, in which state he was borne along upon a hurdle as far as the red house before mentioned. There a waggon was procured for the conveyance of the wounded of their own party, among whom he was carefully placed and conveyed, in a state of insensibility, to the Spanish camp. Surgical aid was then called in, and when he revived, he found himself in a small room, in the presence of the Spanish major and the medical attendant.

"Where am I?" he exclaimed. "Where is my sword?" and he made an effort to rise, but fell back from weakness.

"Here is your sword, my brave lad," said the

major, "and you are among friends—fear nothing."

"Fear!" murmured Ernest, contemptuously.

"He must be kept perfectly quiet," said the surgeon, "all depends on that."

"He shall be taken to my house at Maestricht," said the generous Spaniard, "if you think he can bear the journey."

"Then he must go to-day," observed the surgeon; "I will not answer for him to-morrow."

"Will you accompany him?" inquired the major.

"Gladly," was the reply, "if I can obtain permission."

The permission was soon procured, and Ernest was conveyed to the residence of his captor, where he continued to receive every attention, during some weeks of alternate apathy and wild delirium.

On recovering the use of his faculties, his

first thoughts were fixed on the alleviation of that anxiety which he knew his friends must be enduring respecting his fate.

“ I entreat you now not to refuse me pen, ink, and paper,” said he to the surgeon. “ My recovery, you say, depends upon my remaining tranquil ; but that is impossible till I know that their minds are relieved.”

“ Don Carlos has already communicated with them,” replied the surgeon.

“ Who ?” exclaimed the patient.

“ Don Carlos de Alzara,” was the reply, “ your present host—the officer into whose hands you so happily fell. To him you owe your life.”

“ Let me see him without loss of time then !” exclaimed Ernest ; “ I have something particular to communicate to him.”

“ You shall have an interview with him to-morrow morning,” replied the medical man,

"if I find you sufficiently strong and composed."

It was in vain to argue against this fiat, and Ernest, during a long and weary night, endeavoured to keep his mind as tranquil as possible.

Don Carlos de Alzara was a man of superior bodily and mental endowments, brave to excess, and deeply imbued with the romantic generosity usually ascribed to ancient chivalry. One only stigma could be attached to his character, and that was a fierce spirit of intolerance against heretics, who, he believed, merited all the persecution and cruelty which had, latterly, been exercised toward them. To assist in sweeping them from the face of the earth was, he conceived, a duty incumbent upon all good Catholics, and he had devoted himself, body and soul, to the task. He had, for some years, been residing in the Netherlands, together with his wife and daughter, the latter now a young lady

of sixteen, possessing great personal attractions and strongly resembling her father in those as well as his other qualifications and prejudices.

His lady, Donna Clementina, was of milder spirit than either her husband or her daughter Elvira. She was a good Catholic; but found it difficult to believe that such scenes, as had lately been acted, could be consistent with the meek and lowly precepts of Him, before whose image she daily knelt, and prayed for forgiveness of her sins, even as she forgave others their trespasses against herself. But she was too humble—too little confident in her own powers or judgment, ever to presume to argue upon the subject, though it occupied much of her silent and serious meditation; and in private she frequently implored the giver of light and life, that he would open the eyes of the deluded heretics, and thus, by their reunion under one shepherd, cause the dreadful effects of heresy

to cease. Such were the family and the person of him who, according to invitation, paid a visit to his scarcely convalescent guest and prisoner. After exchanging a few words of congratulation on the one side, and of gratitude on the other, Ernest resumed his accustomed deep and enthusiastic tone.

"You have been generous," said he, "and I know you are brave; would to Heaven that, with such qualities, your eyes were not blinded with worse than Egyptian darkness!"

"Do not talk of that," said Don Carlos, fearing that his guest might inadvertently expose the cloven-foot of heresy (from which he trusted easily to convert one who had evinced so much personal courage, a quality which he valued more highly than any other). "We have fought on opposite sides. What then? each believed he was right—but we are enemies no longer. Let us talk of our mutual friends, as

friends ought to talk. I have not only written several times, but I have had an interview with Count Birkenback, and your sister, and a little girl, who seems greatly interested about you."

"Elinor, poor Elinor!" sighed Ernest.

"Yes, the same," continued Don Carlos. "They are all well, and I told them that you were in a fair way of recovery."

"It would have been better that they should have supposed I was dead!" exclaimed the invalid; "but God's will be done!"

Don Carlos looked surprised, but resumed: "they are by this time, I suppose, in France, where the Prince of Orange has retreated with about twelve hundred cavalry, all that remains now of his army."

"How!" cried Ernest; "has there been a battle, and I here?"

"No," replied his host, with an approving smile at the youth's ardour; "your army has

been disbanded, for want of means to pay the troops, and the war, such as it was, is now at an end."

Ernest groaned, and remained silent for some time. "You are in pain?" asked Don Carlos, kindly; "I fear my talking discomposes you. Perhaps I had better retire."

"No, no—don't go!" exclaimed Ernest; "I have much—much that is important to say to you ere we part—but, first, tell me—do you know any thing of Captain Randolph?"

"Certainly," replied Don Carlos; "and I have a particular communication to make to you from him. He was wounded in the same affair where we first became acquainted, but is doing well, and all is now arranged for the marriage between him and your sister, which is to take place soon after their arrival in France."

"Thank Heaven! then she will not want a protector!" exclaimed the invalid, and, clasping

his hands, he appeared for a while employed in silent thanksgiving.

"Captain Randolph is a brave young fellow," observed Don Carlos, "and I have no doubt they will be happy."

"You are married, they tell me," said Ernest; "and you have, likewise, a wife and a daughter, young and beautiful!"

"They told you truly," observed Don Carlos, smiling at this singular observation; "and I shall be most happy to introduce you to them. They have both taken a great interest in your recovery; and, if you find matters comfortable about you, you may thank them, and not me."

"I am sorry for it!" said the invalid. "But it must be no longer thus. Had I known where I was before, it never should have been. But it seems as though I was waking from a dream. How could you think of bringing me here, when

you know the consequences of harbouring one whom they call a heretic?"

"I know you not in that character," replied the generous Spaniard, "nor will I know you in any other than that of a brave enemy, whom the chance of war has thrown into my hands. My house is your home as long as you like to stay in it. Had my case been as yours, I am sure that you and your friends would have treated me in the same manner. You will, I trust, soon be in a state to choose your own residence; and by that time I hope to have effected your exchange. I have reported you as a German officer, and your party have still some prisoners of ours beyond the Rhine."

"It cannot—cannot—must not be!" exclaimed the youth. "Generous but misguided man! you know not what you do! I am no German! I am a native of this oppressed country! My name is Ernest Freron—my fa-

ther was inhumanly murdered by the tyrant. I am proscribed—and the vengeance of your bloody edicts will be wreaked upon the head of him who gives me shelter! On yours it shall not fall. Go, go, I beseech of you, instantly, now you know the truth, and denounce me to the council. Nay, nay—do not hesitate. Remember your wife and daughter!—would you desert them, and leave them desolate? A widow and an orphan with a tainted name? Away, away! hesitate not for a moment! My path of duty is plain before me. Since the glorious cause, to which I am devoted, may no longer be served by my arm in the field, I hope, by the aid of the Almighty, to bear undaunted witness of the truth amid surrounding flames.”

Don Carlos was greatly agitated. Not all the prejudices of education, confirmed by long habit, could, for a moment, induce him to think of committing so dastardly a breach of the sacred

laws of hospitality; yet when he thought of his wife and daughter, he shuddered at the dangerous situation in which the youth's reckless avowal had placed him. For some time he continued to pace the room in silence, for he felt it was impossible to address the invalid in any other than opprobrious terms. The temperament of mind which is called "firmness" in a good cause, is ever considered "obstinacy" in one of an opposite description. Instead of the high-minded, brave, and aspiring young soldier, Don Carlos now beheld a fierce, pestilent, stubborn heretic, daring impiously to invoke his Creator to uphold him in his course of impiety. Had he found the wretch elsewhere, he would not have hesitated an instant in delivering him up to the vengeance of the law; but now the miserable being had eaten of his bread, and slept beneath his roof, and become one of his family. High and romantic notions of what was required by

the laws of honour and hospitality presented themselves in direct opposition to the duties which he owed to the church, of which he was a zealous member and supporter, and to the king, whom he had sworn to serve, by doing his uttermost for the destruction of his enemies. And now a declared foe and reviler of both was in his power.

“Why do you hesitate?” exclaimed Ernest.
“It is madness to delay! You may *now* save your family from ruin. In another hour it may be too late! I know the blood-thirsty vigilance of the persecutors too well to have any idea of escape. They will find me here—your own servants must soon know the truth, and the reward is tempting. And for my sake!—if you have any mercy yet left, save me from the cruel reflection that I shall have brought destruction upon the head of my benefactor and his family! Believe me, your tyrannical and bigotted king,

and his fiendlike inquisitors, will show no pity ! Remember the Counts Egmont and Horn, and the Baron de Montigny !”

Don Carlos uttered not a word in reply ; but, pressing his hand upon his forehead, rushed out of the apartment. He found his lady sitting alone, engaged, according to the fashion of the times, in a tedious work of embroidery, from which she lifted her eyes at the well-known sound of his footsteps, and became alarmed at the agitation visible in his countenance and manner.

“ What is the matter ? ” she exclaimed. “ Tell me, tell me ! Where is Elvira ? Has any thing happened to her ? ”

“ No, my dearest,” replied Don Carlos, moved by this burst of maternal solicitude, “ our dear child is well. But I have just met with a circumstance which affects me deeply, and you must give me your advice, for you always

decide correctly, because you judge more coolly than myself."

He then related what had passed in the sick room of their guest. The idea of saving a human being from the most cruel of deaths, was most welcome to the gentle spirit of Donna Clementina; and long experience had taught her that the preservation of an unsullied name, which had descended to him without spot or blemish, through a long line of ancestors, was ever as the moving spring to all her husband's thoughts and actions. As was her usual custom, when asked for an opinion on matters of importance, she remained for some time silently meditating her reply. She then said,

"The noble family of Alzara never *yet* betrayed one who found shelter beneath their roof. There was even a case in which the hand of the guest had been stained with the blood of a relative, and the forbearance then shown was, I

remember, mentioned to me as a noble trait of generosity."

"You speak my own thoughts," exclaimed Don Carlos. "It cannot be! And yet a heretic, a blaspheming heretic, is little entitled to mercy. Would that he had died!"

"He may, perhaps, live to repent of his errors," observed Donna Clementina.

"We must get rid of him as we can," said her husband. "You had better, methinks, speak to father Pierre on the subject. He has, more than once, hinted that he thought the measures of the present government somewhat too severe. I dare not mention it to my confessor, for he would instantly decide on delivering up the poor wretch, whose impious declarations I am much disposed to attribute to the effects of his illness—they were, indeed, more like the ravings of a madman than of one possessed of his intellects. But—but—it is a diffi-

cult and perplexing question. Let him be removed, dear Clementina, as quickly as possible, for I may relax. I feel scruples within. I will avoid seeing him again; but I hardly dare to think of what has been uttered with impunity in my presence. You have ever been my comfort, my better angel, in hours of difficulty, and I will commit this affair entirely into your hands, *for the present.*"

Donna Clementina well knew the influence which his confessor exercised over the mind of her lord; and, therefore, immediately she was left to act for herself, resolved that not a moment should be lost in accomplishing her work of mercy.

Father Pierre, a venerable old man, listened with deep attention to her unreserved account, not only of the circumstances attending the case, but likewise of the agitated and scarcely decided state of mind in which Don Carlos yet appeared to be.

"Fair and gentle lady," said he, when she remained silent, "I know the goodness and kindness of your heart. Yours is no vain wish, merely to preserve the imaginary honours of an empty name, elevated perchance, at first, by deeds of violence and oppression, which the lapse of time happily conceals from those who now bear it. We both believe that heretics, dying in their erroneous creed, are doomed to everlasting punishment. If this youth live, he *may* repent, and then great will be your joy hereafter. Be of good cheer, and wait till you see me again. I go, because our moments are precious. Expect me in half an hour, but be not uneasy if I stay somewhat longer, as I must consult with a friend whose engagements frequently require a protracted absence from his home."

The good old man then betook himself to the residence of Doctor Campin, whom the reader

may recollect was the physician to whose attentions probably poor Snell owed his life. When father Pierre had told his tale, the worthy doctor expressed great surprise that *he* should be applied to in such a case.

"It can be of little importance to you," said the venerable priest, "how or when I came by my information, even were I disposed to tell. But I venture boldly to appeal to your knowledge of my character and conduct, and ask if you can suspect that I would take an unfair advantage of it?"

"Indeed, I have no such suspicion," replied the doctor; "but it is very extraordinary."

"If you can find this young man a shelter," continued the priest, "you will thereby rescue more than one life, and save those of others from much future misery and disgrace. He cannot remain longer under Alzara's roof without imminent danger to all parties. That you are

acquainted with some place of security I am assured; but I candidly tell you I know not where, nor do I wish to be told. It would be a painful and a dangerous secret for one of my profession to be acquainted with, as it is not every heretic whom my conscience would allow me to shelter. This, however, is a case in which my path of duty appears clearly before me. The offender is quite a boy, misled probably by the example of an erring father; and the happiness of a whole family of worthy and faithful Catholics is at stake."

After some further urging, the doctor promised to see what could be done, and acknowledged that he certainly had attended patients respecting whose creed there might be some reason to doubt.

"The young man's name," said father Pierre, "must be concealed. It seems that Don Carlos mistook him for a German, as he was long un-

able to give any account of himself, and has made application for his exchange in that character, in which he will be enabled to quit the country in a few days. Your friends will not therefore be long troubled with him."

"Can you tell me his real name?" asked the physician.

"Ernest Freron," was the reply; "he was taken in the last skirmish which the king's troops had with the rebels."

"Most extraordinary!" exclaimed Doctor Campin; "then our task will be, probably, much easier than I expected: but I must see him."

"If you will return with me now to the house of Alzara," said father Pierre, "I will introduce you to Donna Clementina in your medical capacity."

"I will follow you in a quarter of an hour," replied the cautious physician.

While these consultations were in progress concerning his fate, Ernest was endeavouring to add new strength to his mind by perusing the sacred volume. When Don Carlos had left the room without uttering a word, the young enthusiast doubted not that he had gone immediately to fulfil what he conceived to be his religious and paternal duty. By reading and meditation he had wrought himself into a frantic ardour, almost longing for the time when his persecution should commence. A slight noise at the door aroused him from his reverie, in time to conceal his forbidden treasure, ere the room was entered by a stranger, dressed in black, whom he instantly conceived (notwithstanding a smile of benevolence little to be expected in such a case) to be one of the inquisitors.

"We are strangers to each other," said Doctor Campin, advancing towards the couch on which the invalid yet reclined, "but I trust, ere long, we shall be better acquainted."

"I know your business, sir!" exclaimed Ernest, sternly; "you are come to remove me from hence. I am ready."

The doctor looked surprised, for he thought there had scarcely been sufficient time for father Pierre to communicate what had passed.

He, however, replied, "Yes, sir, that certainly is my reason for coming here."

"Well!" said the prisoner, "do your duty. I am what you call a heretic; and that you may have no doubt about the matter, I now tell you to your face, that I consider the mass as the worst species of idolatry, and confessions nothing but a blasphemous farce, got up to delude the people, and get money out of their pockets."

"Really, sir," observed Doctor Campin, somewhat enjoying a mistake which he knew would be so pleasantly rectified;—"really, my good sir, I do not exactly see why you should

address your confession of faith to me. I am not a priest, but a physician."

"Oh! exactly," exclaimed the still deluded Ernest; "come to ascertain if I am able to undergo removal! Here, sir, do your duty--feel my pulse!" and he stretched out his arm. The physician complied with his request, not merely to humour him, but because he wished to know the real state of his health, in order to judge of the probable effect of such a change of prospects as his intelligence would open to the poor youth.

"You are," said he, "in a state of great excitement."

"Something," observed Ernest, gravely, "must be allowed for the weakness of the body; but I trust that my mind is cool and determined. Let me be removed, I beseech you, or, even now, evil tongues may still misrepresent my longer stay beneath this roof."

"I am not what you imagine me," said the doctor, kindly. "Your anxiety on account of this worthy family does you honour, and I cannot allow you to remain longer in suspense. But you must prepare your mind for what I have to communicate. It is now highly strung to endure. Yes! you look at me with surprise. I know and can enter into your feelings. I am no inquisitor—no persecutor—but—tell me! are you prepared to hear?"

"I know not," replied the youth, evidently much affected, but struggling to appear calm; "Don Carlos has behaved nobly—generously hitherto—but—no—it cannot be—it must not be! His wife! his daughter! No—no!"

"His and their safety depend entirely upon your listening calmly to me," said Doctor Campin. "Nay, more—your own safety likewise:" and he fixed his eyes upon the invalid, to observe the effect of his words.

"Mine !" exclaimed Ernest, scornfully.

"Yes," continued the worthy physician, "yours. I know your name, and am acquainted with some of your friends."

"With Monsieur Andelot, I presume," said Ernest. "Tell him not, I entreat you, that I am here ; for he might interest himself concerning me, and he is the only protector my poor sister has at present."

"I do not allude to him," resumed Doctor Campin. "I am a friend, a particular friend I may say, of Charles Randolph's."

"Charles Randolph's !" exclaimed Ernest. "Then I ought to know you. I must have heard him talk of you ! You cannot be—no—"

"I believe you can guess now," observed the doctor, smiling.

"You cannot be the physician who attended Snell ?"

"I am the person," was the reply ; and, a

moment after, the good man's medical assistance was necessary to enable the poor invalid to support the joyous intelligence. He had prepared himself for suffering to the uttermost; and now, in spite of Doctor Campin's caution, he experienced one of those wondrous reactions, in which the mind triumphs over the body, and which have been known to strike strong men dead on the arrival of an unexpected reprieve.

When he was sufficiently recovered, the worthy physician informed him of all that had passed since Don Carlos left his room. "And could a priest, a Spaniard, a confessor, interfere in behalf of a heretic?" asked Ernest.

"Yes, even so," replied the doctor. "I fear that our religions have made us unjust and uncharitable on both sides. The family, too, who have protected you, are rigid Catholics; and I likewise am a member of the same church. We are not *all* persecutors. I have my wishes

—very different from yours—for the termination of this strife of angry feelings and bloodshed. It would afford me sincere pleasure to hear that you could, conscientiously, conform to the rites and forms of the old religion; but, if you cannot, the matter is between God and your own soul, and I feel myself bound by duty to do all I can for the preservation of every human life equally, as long as it shall please the Giver of that life to continue it, whether to Catholic or heretic, Jew or Gentile.”

“It is wonderful!” exclaimed Ernest, and he muttered a silent prayer for the conversion of his benefactor.

Doctor Campin soon afterwards produced a map of the town, in which he indicated the exact situation of the house of refuge in which Snell and Charles Randolph had been secreted, and the only change in which, since their departure, was, that it was still more desolate and

ruinous, and seemed, indeed, to be left entirely to decay. When all was arranged for his departure in the evening, Ernest felt a great desire to take leave of his host, and express his gratitude; but Don Carlos dared not trust himself again with the young heretic. The domestics were purposely engaged, in different parts of the house, and father Pierre gave the preconcerted signal, by striking three times on the chamber door. The invalid then came forth, and followed his guide through two streets, where he was left to make the best of his way alone, agreeable to his instructions, as the worthy confessor turned into a shop, in order that he might not see what direction the refugee pursued, and thus remain in a state of safe and conscientious ignorance, in case of inquiry.

Ernest found the house, and gained admittance, much in the same way as his friends had done before; and, having passed the preceding

night in the contemplation of sufferings which might appal the stoutest heart, he now felt the full value of peace and security.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the evening after our troopers' visit to the castle of St. Antoine, a messenger arrived from the inquisitor at Liege, requesting the favour of an early call from the governor. As such an intimation was little less than a command, Van Laret prepared, with a heavy heart, for the journey. Any one who had been ignorant of his real character might then have pitied his condition. The effects of his fall, and Fido's rage, were visible on divers parts of his person, and in every movement; but all bodily sufferings were as nothing when compared to those of his mind. Deprived of his dearly earned gold, and the lowliness of his origin exposed, he

had spent the greater part of the day in pacing his apartment, to and fro, like the untameable hyæna in its den, venting, ever and anon, his rage in deep and bitter execrations, and then sinking, from mere exhaustion, on his couch. He was even deprived of the society of Momper, who excused himself upon the plea of being compelled to mark out and measure a lot of timber, which was to be felled on the estate, while, in reality, he was engaged in a very different manner.

Shortly after the receipt of the inquisitor's message, Van Laret summoned one of his remaining followers, and gave orders that his horse should be in readiness by day-break on the following morning, and then desired that the steward should be sent to him immediately he returned. More than two hours again passed away in dreary solitude, and his usual time for going to rest had arrived, but still Momper came not.

"It is most extraordinary, what can have become of the steward!" said he to a servant maid, as she was leaving his room.

La! sir," exclaimed the girl, "Master Momper has been at home, and had his supper, and been gone to bed for this hour."

"Gone to bed!" cried Van Laret, angrily, "and when I desired particularly to see him! Go and tell him to come here directly." The girl immediately withdrew on her errand; and he continued, "A precious scoundrel! This is the way that I am to be treated now by my own servants, is it? But I'll let him know that I'm his master at any rate!"

The girl, in the meanwhile, knocked loudly at Momper's door, for some time, without effect; but at length a voice inquired, "What's the matter?"

"You must come directly to the governor," cried the girl; "he wants to see you particularly, and is in a great passion."

"With all my heart," replied Momper, "and he may remain in a passion if he will, for I shan't stir out of my bed again to-night."

"Well, but I can't tell him that, you know," said the girl.

"You may if you like," cried the steward, "for that's the only answer you'll get of me. And so, good night! And don't make any more noise, for I want to go to sleep."

The poor girl scarcely dared to thrust her head into the room where her angry master was, in order to deliver her message, which, though she somewhat softened its matter, produced no small effect.

"Very well," said Van Laret; "you may go to bed, and I'll go to him." He then gave vent to a volley of oaths, and proceeded to the steward's chamber. "Holla!" he cried, striking the door furiously, "Holla there! Momper! What

the vengeance do you mean by sneaking off to bed when I wanted to see you ?”

“ Its of no use to talk to me now,” cried Momper, for I’m half asleep. I was up all last night, and have been working hard all day, and must have rest.”

“ Well, well,” said Van Laret, in a somewhat milder tone, for he felt a wish still to keep on fair terms with his only friend, “ I know all that, and won’t keep you long. But, you shouldn’t have sneaked off without speaking to me. I’m obliged to go over to Liege tomorrow morning, early.”

This information effectually roused the steward, and he immediately rose and opened the door.

“ I have just received a message from a particular friend,” said Van Laret, seating himself. “ It’s on private business—but it will give me

an opportunity of reporting that cursed business of last night. I wanted you to have drawn up an account of it to-day; but there was no finding you. Come, come—just throw on a few clothes! It can't take you long now, and you'll do it better than I can, because you can say I was wounded, safe enough, or they'd never have got in, though there was such a difference in numbers. Come—we'll just have a bottle of Johannisberg over the business, and it will be soon done."

"It's of no use now," replied the steward, "I'm half asleep as it is, and all the Johannisberg in the cellar wouldn't rouse me. But I'll be stirring early in the morning, and see what I can do."

"I meant to start at daybreak," said the governor, "but I don't mind waiting an hour or so."

"Well, well," murmured the steward yawn-

ing, "I'll see all about it—in the morning—heigho! I shall fall asleep talking if I don't mind."

Van Laret, perceiving that nothing was likely to be gained by staying, left the room, and gave himself no small degree of credit for the restraint under which he had kept his anger.

"Aye, aye," said Momper, when left alone, "I'll draw up an account for you, master dung-carrier Laret, I'll warrant! Going to Liege, eh? And I'll know what that's about, too."

In the morning, when Van Laret was prepared for his journey, he was informed that the steward had gone out early, and had left word that he should return in a few hours. "A few hours!" muttered the governor to himself. "what can the fellow mean? Does he think I am to wait his pleasure? But I'll show him that I can do without him. Yes, after all, that may be the best way; Five marks enough about

me to show, and maybe he'd put some cursed lies on paper that would be found out some day or other. I'll wait no longer," and he ordered his horses and proceeded on his journey.

On his arrival at Liege, his first visit was to the Council of Tumults, to whom he was introduced in the small private room which he had such good reasons to remember.

"Your *friends* are heretics with a vengeance, Mynheer Van Laret," said the Spaniard. "I fear that it is scarcely possible they could have lived under the same roof with you so long, without your becoming acquainted with their sentiments, for they do not attempt any disguise even here."

"I can safely take my oath, as a soldier and a gentleman," replied Van Laret, "that they never uttered a word in my presence either against the king or the church. It was merely by accident I overheard what convinced me

what they were. But it was not exactly under my roof that they lived, though in the same castle—for they had every thing separate, and were just the same as if in a house by themselves.”

“ And pray,” inquired the counsellor, “ who paid their expenses? No hesitation, remember where you are.”

“ The gentleman certainly did request me not to mention his name,” replied Van Laret; “ but, when the cause of religion requires it, I do not think myself bound to humour his whim. It was Monsieur Andelot, of Maestricht, a very worthy gentleman and a good Catholic, and I may say, a sort of relation of mine.”

“ Very good, Monsieur,” said the Spaniard, “ you have answered correctly, and allow me to tell you that it is always the *safest* way to do so with us, for we have sources of information of which you little dream. Now—please to in-

form me what property and funds Monsieur Andelot has in his possession belonging to these wretches."

"I know nothing of that matter, I assure you," replied Van Laret; "all I know is, that he always paid me, according to our agreement."

"That answer will not satisfy me," observed the inquisitor, frowning: "I have good reason to believe that you know they have property, and what that property is."

"On my honour," said the governor, "I assure your excellency, that I know nothing about the matter. I only suppose they must have *something*, because it is not likely that Monsieur Andelot would pay all their expenses out of his own pocket."

"Recollect yourself, and where you are!" exclaimed the inquisitor, sternly.

"Indeed," replied the agitated governor,

"I have nothing to recollect. I have told you all I know."

"Do you pretend to make me believe," continued the Spaniard, "that you, a man fond of money, as I am told you are, and have every reason to suppose—do you pretend to make me believe that *you* would lend the sum of two thousand ducats to a young woman of whose property you were entirely ignorant? Ah! I have touched you now I see. Come, sir—out with the truth! or I'll commit you, instantly, to a place where we have ways and means to extort it."

Caught thus again in the snare prepared by his own villany, the wretched man was unable to invent any plausible account of how he became possessed of the two notes, to which he had obtained Isabella's signature, under the pretext of giving security for expenses incurred owing to the escape of Snell. He likewise re-

membered having told his lawyer, when giving instructions for the recovery of the money, that he had previously advanced the amount.

"I have no time to lose," resumed the inquisitor, stamping on the floor, "you must answer the question hereafter." And he gave a well-known sign to the person who attended his summons.

"I assure your excellency," said the trembling culprit, "that I know nothing of the nature of their property, and it was merely out of confidence in Monsieur Andelot, who instructed me to advance what money they wanted."

"A likely story!" exclaimed the Spaniard, "when he, by your own account, paid you handsomely for all their expenses. But I'll give you one more trial, to see if you can be induced to speak the truth on another point—and, remember, the men are now at the door to conduct you

to prison if you prevaricate in the least. You say you advanced these two thousand ducats to Isabella Freron, who was then residing under your roof, having all her expenses paid by a third person. Now, in such a place as the castle of St. Antoine, and under such circumstances, she could not possibly require so large a sum, unless for some very *extraordinary* purpose, with which of course you *must* have been made acquainted. I tell you plainly that I suspect it was intended to aid the rebels; and that her brother, who is now it seems missing from your castle, has taken it to their army."

"I solemnly assure you," said Van Laret, "that he knows nothing of the matter, nor was any part ever intended for such a purpose."

"Then for what purpose *was* the money advanced?" asked the inquisitor. "No hesitation, or by Heaven! you shall rue it."

"It was advanced at different times," replied

Van Laret, "for various purchases, such as young ladies often make, and they were added together at last, and so made up the sum."

"What did she buy, pray?" asked the Spaniard, with a sneer.

"I don't exactly know," stammered the governor, "necklaces, rings, ear-rings, and bracelets, I believe. They come to a great deal of money."

"Very true," resumed the inquisitor, in the same sarcastic strain. "They do come to a great deal of money, though young ladies are seldom unwilling to confess having so spent it. It is somewhat odd, however, that your young heretical friend should have entirely forgotten all about buying her necklaces and so on, though she acknowledges that you have advanced money, for which she considers herself responsible. You see you are wasting your ingenuity. Nothing but truth will do here; and,"

he continued, furiously stamping on the floor, "by the blessed memory of St. Ignatius! we'll have it out of one or other of you before we have done with you!"

The room was instantly entered by a party of ruffians, who handcuffed the wretched Van Laret and hurried him to prison, not without some ineffectual resistance on his part, for the loss of two thousand ducats, the last remains of his ill-gotten wealth, rendered him desperate. Not an hour before, he had been endeavouring to console himself, for what he called the robbery of the night before last, by reflecting that he had still taken precautions, by which he should be repaid for the escape of his prisoner: and now those very acts of deceit appeared to be the sole cause of throwing him into the hands of the inquisition. If we were to say that he felt any thing of remorse or contrition, the terms would be improperly applied, for the conse-

quences of his crimes formed the *only* source of his provocation and regret. His dark spirit would have been ready and eager to enter immediately upon any course of deeper iniquity that might have presented itself, with a chance of working his escape. Far different were his solitary hours to those of the two orphans whom he had betrayed, and who were now unconsciously beneath the same roof with their betrayer.

On the day when Isabella and Elinor were ordered to be removed to Maestricht, as incorrigible heretics, and were so happily rescued by the way, Van Laret was taken from his prison to the bishop's court, where his former friend, the deputy-secretary's assistant was sitting among his superiors, in all the formality of office. On a chair, at the side of the president, sate the inquisitor who had committed him. The rest were arranged round a large table, in due order, according to their rank, by which one of the lower seats fell

to the lot of the prisoner's quondam friend, and they were thus brought near to each other, but no sign of recognition was given by the latter.

"Gerard Van Laret, as you call yourself, your proper name being Laret, which you will hereafter take," said the president, "that is, if you escape from the serious charges against you in another court. Gerard Van Laret I must style you here, because your name is so written in our books! You are not brought here to undergo your trial, *that* will take place before a higher tribunal," here he bowed to the member of the Council of Tumults, who replied, with a condescending nod; "our duty merely is to announce to you, that you, Gerard Van Laret, are from henceforth, and for ever after this our present sitting, discharged from, and deprived of, and divested, ejected, and turned out from all manner of trust, right, title, controul, influence, and command in any way appertaining to the

castle or Fort of St. Antoine, commonly called Fort Santon, and likewise of and from all manner of trust, right, title, controul, influence, and command in any way appertaining to the estate attached to, and situate round about, or in the vicinity of the said castle, or Fort of St. Antoine, commonly called Fort Santon, all of which are now held in trust by this court, in behalf and for the benefit of certain individuals whom it is not necessary here to name, as that is all that concerns the present case."

"If you are determined to turn me out," said Van Laret, after a short pause, "I can't help it. All I can say is that I have done my duty, and more than my duty while I lived there. The estate is worth double what it was then. I shall expect to be paid for what I've laid out upon the land, as well as for repairs in the inside of the castle, and for furniture, which I never should have gone to the

expense of, if I hadn't thought of living there for many years."

"Money, you see," observed the Spaniard in a low voice to the president, "money is the fellow's god. Just as I told you."

"Exactly," said the president, in reply, and then elevating his tone, he addressed the prisoner. "A regular account will be taken of all such matters, and a proper inventory delivered into the hands of the court, whose prisoner you now are."

Van Laret replied only by a sigh, for little he feared might be expected in such a case, even if he were eventually acquitted, and of that he had some hopes, grounded on the firmness of Isabella, since the mere act of lending money could not be deemed criminal, if a criminal intent were not proved.

"What was that business," asked a secretary, "concerning which this Laret was once called upon, about a year ago, I think—something

about the escape of a prisoner, if I mistake, not?"

"Yes," replied his deputy, "that was a very awkward business—but we received such a very high character of him as a good Catholic, from the clergyman of his parish, that the whole blame was cast upon a poor old woman, who had been long in the service of the late Count St. Antoine. I'm afraid, however, that he had friends in court," and he glanced at the assistant, who hung down his head and made no reply.

"Where is the old woman?" exclaimed the president; "the bishop is extremely particular in having all old servants provided for. Where is this old woman they speak of? Gerard Van Laret, do you hear?"

"I don't know where she is," replied the prisoner, sulkily; "she left my service of her own accord, as the people at the castle all know. I suppose her whims will be brought as a charge against me next."

"Remember where you are, fellow! and whom you are speaking to," said the president.

"You'd better send him away," observed the inquisitor, "we'll tame him, I'll engage, and you shall have any information we can get."

"But, respecting this old servant," exclaimed the president. "If she is innocent, as there seems no doubt now she is, the bishop would never pardon us if we abandoned her to want after so many years of faithful servitude."

"Then remand the prisoner, and call in the steward," said the Spaniard.

"Most excellent counsel!" observed the president, "my dear sir, your judgment is really—you are always right." He then gave orders for the removal of Van Laret, and commanded that Momper should be desired to attend.

The reader will, probably, have guessed that the information of the servant was the cause of

his master's removal. Such was the fact, and Momper had more than one reason for his conduct on this occasion. Accustomed ever to consider himself as acting more immediately on account of the bishop's court, than for Van Laret, whom he looked upon latterly as a sort of useless incumbrance on the estate, he was dissatisfied with holding the second place under a man who was always obliged to refer to him for information. Nothing but a conviction that the castle was considered a military station, prevented him from reporting the governor's inability long before; and, when the little garrison was so much reduced by the Spanish captain, he purposed to take the first opportunity of throwing out a hint to his employers, by which much money might be saved. This might appear ungrateful; but, since the governor had acquired other friends, he was not wont to treat his steward with the same degree of familiarity

"Remember where you are, fellows! and what you are speaking it," said the president.

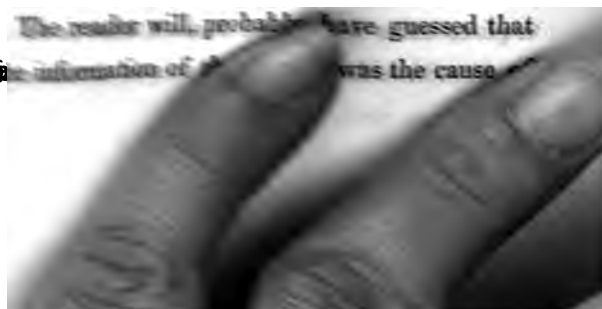
"Don't understand him any," observed the speaker. "we'll know him. He engage, and we shall have any information we can get."

"For reporting the old servant," exclaimed the president. "If she is innocent, as they seem to think now she is, the more would never permit us if we abandoned her to wait until so many years of faithful service."

"Then dismiss the prisoner, and call in the guards," said the president.

"Most excellent command!" observed the president. "My last on your judgment is really —are not always right." He then gave orders for the removal of Van Lox, and commanded that Kemper should be desired to attend.

The reader will, probably, have guessed that the information of the President was the cause of



as heretofore ; and not unfrequently showed airs of haughty and supercilious condescension, which were hard to be endured ; though, when he had any purpose to effect by it, he was as familiar and friendly as ever.

Such being the state of affairs between them, it was no wonder that Momper decided upon his plan of action when the attempted assassination and robbery were brought to light by the arrival of our troopers. To dwell longer with a man guilty of such crimes, was utterly out of the question ; and, moreover, he felt not a little sore at having been made the dupe of his artifices. If he could have reached Liege in time to raise the alarm, and capture the unwelcome visitors, in their way back from the castle, he justly calculated that the circumstances would add not a little to the favour which he hoped to gain, but that enterprise being foiled, as we have seen, by the vigilance of Captain Randolph, there re

mained only his original intention to be executed.

On the following morning, therefore, he rode over to the town, and reported all that had occurred; and, after a long consultation, he was ordered to return to the castle that night for the purpose of bringing from thence such papers, books, and documents, as were necessary for the final adjustment of the accounts, previous to Van Laret's dismissal from office. Some opposition to the process of ejectment was expected from the delinquent; but the proceedings of the Spanish inquisitor soon relieved the bishop's agents from their apprehensions on that account.

When Momper made his appearance before the court, after Van Laret's removal, he was questioned relative to the present condition and abode of the old housekeeper, and the president was not a little shocked to find that they had lost all trace of her. Momper related the cir-

cumstances which induced her to go upon her travels after the bones of her grandfather, and divers individuals present commented upon the wickedness and cruelty of the late governor; but, it must be confessed that, notwithstanding the habitual gravity of the court, more than one of its members seemed rather to enjoy the joke, and somewhat like satisfaction appeared in the twinkling eyes and ambiguous smile of the swarthy Spaniard.

“Gaspar Momper,” said the president, gravely, “we have every reason to be satisfied with your conduct hitherto; but before we can make any arrangements relative to the future management of the estate of St. Antoine, this worthy woman must be found and reinstated in her situation of housekeeper. Nothing can be done till then; and, therefore, I strongly recommend you to set yourself to the task, if you wish to stand well in the eyes of this court, and

perform a service which will be duly appreciated by our lord the bishop."

"I think," replied Momper, "that, if you can furnish me with a map, I should be able to find out the spot where she was directed to go; for I remember looking it out soon after she went, in order to see where she had to travel."

A map of Zealand was speedily produced, and he soon confidently laid his finger upon a spot marked as a village called Ulterdam.

"Then you had better make the best of your way there," said the president. "You may charge the estate with your expenses; and if you bring back the good woman safe and sound, I promise that you shall have no reason to regret your journey."

"I will certainly do as your excellency pleases," replied Momper; "but I beseech you to recollect that, just now, we are getting in a fine crop of apples; and we have much increased

our growth of hops, which are not to be surpassed any where, and require great care in gathering and drying. I'm afraid my absence will make a sad difference just now; but I'll do just as your excellency thinks fit."

"Your observations are very judicious," observed the president; "we certainly must not allow the estate to be neglected. The only difficulty will be relative to the identity of the person in question." This objection was speedily removed by Momper's particular description of Mrs. Bhlum.

"Yes," said the president, "the circumstance of her having only one eye will be a sufficient indication."

The steward was then dismissed, with full power to use his own judgment in the future management of the estate; and a trusty officer of the court, who was considered able to find any body any where, was despatched in search

of the old housekeeper, with instructions to show her every kindness and attention, and bring her to Liege.

For some days after this degradation from office, Van Laret continued unquestioned in his solitary prison, a species of punishment which was perhaps the heaviest that could be inflicted on such a man, under existing circumstances. As wine was not to be procured, it was impossible to escape from reflection, and reflection was torment to one who, even if delivered from present danger, must enter the world with all his prospects blasted, and a character which would cause all men to shun his acquaintance. At length he was again conducted into the presence of the inquisitor, who received him alone, and with a degree of suavity very different from his demeanour at their last conference.

"You have been somewhat hardly dealt by, Monsieur Van Laret," said he; "but it is no

more than every man must expect who has any dealings with these accursed heretics. You have, however, brought all upon yourself, by prevaricating with me in the first instance, although I warned you of the consequences. Why could not you have told me at once, that the two thousand ducats were to indemnify you for the consequences of your prisoner's escape? If you had—do you think I should have blamed you for fleecing the god-denying wretches? Not I. Particularly as you afterwards shot the villain. I see the thing plain enough—you never meant to let him get off, but only to deceive him and lead him into a snare; and very properly too, for all is fair against 'heretics.' ”

“ Yes,” replied Van Laret, “ that was my motive; and if he had been killed in his attempt at escaping, I meant to have delivered his body to the court.”

“ Aye, aye, and it is a pity you did not finish

the business," observed the inquisitor, "it would have made one less; and when we attempt to destroy vermin, every head counts for something."

"I had no doubt that he was killed," said Van Laret; "and I went down early next morning, with two of my men, to look for the body, but it was gone."

"Give me the names of those men, will you?" asked the Spaniard.

"Govert and Ralph," replied the ex-governor; "and when we couldn't find it, I sent out all my people to scour the forest, telling them that a prisoner had escaped from Namur, because none of them knew we had any one confined in the castle."

"Ah, Van Laret, Van Laret!" exclaimed the inquisitor, "if you had told me all this at first in the same open candid way you do now, you might yet have been in your castle, more firmly

fixed than ever; for I will always support those who show themselves to be the determined enemies of these infernal heretics."

"I was a fool for not doing so," said Van Laret, despondingly; "but as my plan didn't *quite* succeed, I thought it would seem so much like a betrayal of my trust, and bribery——"

"Nonsense," observed the counsellor, "any means are lawful for despoiling heretics! As for the real property of your lodgers I know you are unacquainted with it, as Monsieur Andelot has been questioned on the subject. All charges therefore, respecting the money supposed to have been advanced for the use of the rebels, is at an end; and the only one which remains against you is on the score of your former prevarication. However, I have no doubt we shall get over that, if what you have now told me agrees with the account to be given by your men, Govert and Ralph; and then we shall be able to set you at Liberty."

"I forgot," observed Van Laret, "to say that the men didn't know what my errand was, as I meant to have stumbled upon the body, as if by accident, and then to have had it brought here, where it would have been known by the parties concerned, and my people have been never the wiser."

"Excellently well arranged, my good friend!" exclaimed the Spaniard, "I see your plan was well laid; but the best will fail sometimes. It is a thousand pities that you were not more open with me at first! but it is of no use to talk of that now. What do you think of doing after your liberation? Can I be of any use to you? We have a great many people in our employ, and ample funds. I assure you many of our places are well worth any man's acceptance; for, besides that we give liberal salaries, the allowances out of sequestrations are frequently of considerable amount. I should think, with

your talents, that you would very soon retrieve the losses which you have lately sustained, and, eventually, realize far more than ever you would have been able to do as governor of a petty out-post. Well, well—you'll think of it."

"There's no occasion for that!" exclaimed the delighted prisoner, "I have no home now; and, as I have served the king before, against his open enemies, I'm as willing to serve him and the church now, against these cursed reformers, as they call themselves; only I hope your excellency will recollect in what station in society I have been accustomed to move?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" replied the inquisitor, scarcely able to restrain a smile, as the particulars of the prisoner's history were by this time generally known.

"As I said before, we have some posts worth any man's acceptance; and the duke's gene-

rosity is unbounded to those who show themselves zealous in the good cause."

"He shall have no reason to complain of me," said Van Laret; "for I always hated the heretics as I do the devil; and now, as they have been the cause of all my troubles and losses, I'll hunt 'em out with a vengeance. Hang me if I desire better sport! if it were only for the sake of the sport itself." And he seemed, in the prospect of it, to have recovered somewhat like his usual spirits.

"Well then, you may consider the business as settled," said the inquisitor, "only you must just go back to your present lodgings for form sake, till I have an opportunity of speaking to your men."

"Will your excellency be pleased to allow me to be furnished with wine?" asked the prisoner; "for I have latterly been so little accustomed to be stinted, that I feel quite faint for want of my usual quantity."

“Certainly,” replied the Spaniard, “I will give the necessary orders, for I no longer consider you as a prisoner, but one of us. In the meanwhile, till we meet again, just endeavour to recollect what families you know which are likely to be subject to the penalties of the law; and, perhaps, you will be able to mark out a profitable undertaking for yourself.”

The newly-enlisted persecutor was then re-conducted to his prison, where, under the influence of wine, he gave himself up to dreams of future gain, in the career so unexpectedly opened, and so accordant with his habits and inclinations.

CHAPTER X.

Soon after Van Laret left the inquisitor's private chamber of audience, Monsieur Andelot was ushered in, to have a second conference, or rather to undergo a second examination ; having been summoned, from his own home, by one of those invitations which few thought it prudent to decline.

After the inquisitor had requested his visitor to be seated, he began the conversation by stating that the two female prisoners had been enabled to make their escape, in consequence of the interference of a body of the rebel troops. It was well for M. Andelot that this intelligence had previously reached him, from some of the

underlings, or his emotions would scarcely have escaped the scrutinizing eyes of the Spaniard, who spoke of the event abruptly, in order to mark what effect it would produce. As matters were, the listener appeared rather concerned than pleased, and observed that it was a deplorable thing that the rebels had been able to cross the river: "but," he continued, "this cannot last long. They must soon surrender to the duke, and then all their prisoners will be again in the power of the government."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the inquisitor; "but that is not our present business, which merely relates to the two females who were under your care."

"Excuse me, sir," observed Monsieur Andelot, "not exactly under my care, or you may rely upon it they would long since have become acquainted with the existence of a court, to a member of which I have now the honour of addressing myself."

"I will be very plain and candid with you," resumed the Spaniard. "Our last conversation was very brief, and merely for the purpose of elucidating a little mystery in Van Laret's affair. But now the case is entirely your own."

As Monsieur Andelot had long since made all his arrangements, and rehearsed to himself, frequently, all imaginable questions and the most proper answers to be given whenever he might be called upon, he was at no loss on the present occasion, but instantly replied, "And I, sir, you may rely on it, will be equally candid with you. If it is in my power to afford you any information that may be useful in this or any other case, I shall be most happy; for no man wishes for the extirpation of heresy more than myself. Indeed, I have reason to detest it; for the father of these deluded young creatures was my most intimate, my dearest friend, and there was not a better man nor a sounder

Catholic in all his majesty's dominions than he was, till he became tainted with these new-fangled, pestilent doctrines. The moment I suspected that to be the case, I wrote to him on the subject, hoping to have received a contradiction to the report; but I got no reply. Our intercourse, therefore, ceased ever after; and thus I lost my friend in the most painful manner that a friend could be lost, for his death would have been far more welcome."

"But allow me to ask you," said the inquirer, "for my duty compels me to speak plainly, and to propose what might otherwise appear impertinent questions, why, as all intercourse had ceased between you, you should have given yourself any trouble about his children!"

"Trouble, sir!" exclaimed Monsieur Andelot; "you may well call it by that name! I have had a great deal of trouble; but it was not of my own seeking I assure you. It seems that,

after the execution of the deluded man, a sort of will was found, made some years before, in which my name was mentioned as executor and trustee for the children, and, therefore, I was obliged to go to Valenciennes. What had become of the greater part of the property could not be discovered; but it was supposed that, since he had forsaken his religion, he must have fooled it away in support of some of these mad expeditions against the government. What remained was, of course, forfeited to the crown, and the children were all that I found to take possession of. Something I could not avoid feeling on recollecting past days, and I determined to remove them from a spot where, otherwise, they would probably become associated with the companions of their late father; and it struck me that Van Laret's place, from its extreme loneliness, was more likely than any other to keep them out of the reach of conta-

gion. I therefore made particular inquiry, and found that the new doctrines had never yet made their appearance in that neighbourhood; and that the clergyman was a person of most undoubted orthodoxy. Of Van Laret's principles I never had any reason to doubt, as you may imagine, when I tell you that he married a distant relative of mine."

"But surely, my dear sir," exclaimed the inquisitor, "you had some conversation with the children on the subject of religion?"

"Not I, I assure you," replied Monsieur Andelot, boldly. "It is one of my maxims never to introduce such matters to young people: as I consider that they have no right to have *any* opinions. All they have to do is, to listen and obey. It is a dangerous thing to ask them questions, sir—too much like giving them a choice of religions—like telling them to pick and choose. It sets them questioning in return,

and then they begin to argue with themselves and others about this, that, and the other thing, concerning which they know nothing; nor, as I said before, have any right to an opinion of their own."

"Your motives might be very good," observed the Spaniard, "but your mode of arguing is somewhat singular, and I cannot think your conduct quite judicious."

"And yet I assure you," resumed Monsieur Andelot, "that nine heretics out of ten commence their course in the way I have described. *You* see them only when they are hardened and confirmed in their course; but I have often had occasion to notice them in the beginning, which invariably is indicated by a disposition to *talk* about religion, rather than to be content with the performance of its duties. I have, consequently, always set my face against such conversations; and, whenever I found that the

parties would persist, I have dropped their acquaintance, and too often have had reason to congratulate myself on having adopted such a course. In the present case, however, I must say that I had no cause to suspect the orphans, as the eldest conducted herself with extreme propriety during the short time I was with her, and wore a crucifix about her neck, an emblem which seems particularly obnoxious to these miserable infidels."

"Yes, the young termagant wears it yet," said the inquisitor; "but the youth—what have you to say about him? As far as I can judge, he seems to be a most outrageous blasphemer, and has taken great pains to instil his cursed unbelief into the mind of the youngest girl, who is as pretty a specimen of impudence, arrogance, and self-conceit, as ever was brought up for examination."

"Really, I know nothing more of the boy,

than that he can ride tolerably well," replied Monsieur Andelot; "for there was no room for him in the carriage which conveyed the girls and myself from Valenciennes to Namur, and so I was obliged to hire a horse for him."

"I cannot sufficiently admire your disinterested generosity," observed the Spaniard, in a sarcastic manner. "You must be a rich man, sir, thus to afford to throw away money in travelling, and for board and lodging, and incidental expenses, without any prospect of repayment."

"Not exactly so," replied Monsieur Andelot, smiling; "you do me too much honour. I said that the father of these children was *supposed* to have fooled away the greater part of his property in supporting the wretched cause to which he was attached; but, on a closer examination of his papers, I found that he had purchased an estate in England, which will

come into the son's possession as soon as he is of age; and then, of course, I shall expect to be repaid for all that I have advanced."

"Whereabouts is the estate situated, and what is its value?" asked the Spaniard. "We must get possession of it, if possible; for you must be aware that it is forfeited by the father's sentence of condemnation."

"Most assuredly it is," replied the wary guardian; "but nothing can be done till the youth is of age, as it was bought in his name, or rather in the names of English trustees on his account, most likely when his parent anticipated what the termination of his wretched career might possibly be. The estate is in Gloucestershire, one of the English counties, and I have procured a rough plan of it, which I have now in my pocket, together with all the letters and papers connected with this troublesome business. There—" he continued, emptying his

pockets, "I have brought them *all* with me, and deliver them up into your hands, if you like to take them. I don't know that they will be of any use; but they *may*—and my wish is, by every means in my power, to forward the ends of strict justice."

"But have you never previously given information respecting this estate?" asked the counsellor, sternly.

"To be sure I have!" replied Monsieur Andelot. "Here is a letter from the secretary of your Council, thanking me for the intelligence, and for the pains I had taken in acquiring it."

The Spaniard looked eagerly at the letter, and felt mortified at seeing that it was dated six months before: for he much wished to implicate a man of his visitor's property in the affairs of his recent prisoners.

"Is this estate," he asked, "all that you

depend upon for the repayment of what you have advanced?"

"That, and the accumulation of rents till he is of age," replied Monsieur Andelot.

"I'm afraid you have made a bad speculation," said the inquisitor. "How can you expect that a heretic, even if he should escape and get possession, will pay you money which you cannot claim by law?"

"You forget that I had no idea of his being a heretic," replied Monsieur Andelot. "As things have turned out, I will sell the debt cheap to any one. It will be a lesson to me to be more cautious in future."

"I do not know that we have any occasion to converse longer on the subject," remarked the disappointed Spaniard, who knew Andelot's connections too well to venture upon his committal, without something like a plausible charge.

"As you please," was the reply; "if you should recollect any thing hereafter, I shall be most happy to wait upon you. Will you allow me now to ask a question respecting Van Laret, who is, I understand, at present in your custody?"

"Certainly," replied the Spaniard, "that is, if I can answer it consistently with the duties of my office."

"Of course," said Monsieur Andelot, "otherwise I cannot expect it. The fact is, that Van Laret is considerably in my debt, and I am anxious to know whether in the event of his condemnation my claims will be allowed?"

"Van Laret in *your* debt," exclaimed the inquisitor; "I should rather have imagined that you were in his. What can your claims possibly consist of?"

"In the first place," replied Monsieur Andelot, "he has prevailed upon my agent to advance

him money, not yet due, on account of these young heretics. That, however, I don't think so much about as the advantage he has taken of my name, to purchase all sorts of expensive furniture, pretending that they were necessary for the accommodation of his lodgers. As I certainly gave him leave to refer the tradespeople to me, I must pay the bills; but instead of a few necessary articles, which were all I gave him leave to buy, the fellow seems to have furnished his whole castle at my expense; and now he has been committed to prison, the people call upon me for payment. I have been perfectly worried by them since my arrival here;" and he produced a number of long bills from his pocket. The Spaniard was not a little amazed at this characteristic trait in his new acquaintance, particularly as he recollected the claim made upon the bishop's court for payment on account of the furniture in question.

“Look!” continued Monsieur Andelot, spreading out the papers; “here are beds, cellarets, chairs, tables, glasses—even plate—every thing that can be thought of. And last Christmas I paid other bills which appeared to me rather more than sufficient; though I did not make any objection at the time, as I knew he was a widower, and the castle had long been uninhabited. My easy compliance, however, seems to have emboldened him.”

“I am sorry for your loss, my dear sir,” exclaimed the Spaniard; “but you really must excuse my laughing at this trick of the fellow’s. What could have induced you to lend him the use of your name?”

When two men sit together at the same table, enjoying the same joke, they are, for the time, upon the footing of equality; and Monsieur Andelot could scarcely regret a loss which placed him upon such easy and familiar terms

with a member of the Council of Tumults, at the termination of an interview which he had long dreaded.

"I can hardly help laughing either," he replied, "only I must pay somewhat dearly for the joke. But, the fact is, I never suspected the fellow. How could I imagine that a rough soldier like him could ever dream of wanting such things?"

"Oh," said the Spaniard, "I can assure you he has kept right worshipful company lately. The clergy have done him and you the honour of dining at your table, and drinking out of your glasses. All you can do now, however, is to apply to the bishop's court, for he is a ruined man, and will be discharged from our custody, most likely to-morrow, as, with all his faults, there seems to be no charge of heresy against him."

Thus ended Monsieur Andelot's long antici-

pated hour of trial. The inquisitor assured him that there was not a shadow of imputation against his character, and apologized for having given him the trouble of coming over. The gratified visitor, in reply, said that he never could think any thing a trouble that in any way appeared likely to answer the ends of strict justice; but, in the present instance, he was most amply repaid by making the acquaintance of a gentleman, of whose talents and zeal in the good cause he had often heard honourable mention.

The inquisitor accompanied him to the door, where they shook hands; and the delighted Monsieur Andelot warmly pressed his new friend to favour him with a call the first time he came over to Maestricht. Next to a rich prisoner, the Spaniard valued an opulent and influential acquaintance, and therefore the invitation was accepted; and, in due time, the wary guardian

had the gratification of entertaining a member of the Council of Tumults at his board, an honour which effectually removed him beyond the reach of all suspicion.

In the meanwhile the arrest and confinement of so important a character as the governor of the castle of St. Antoine, had created a great sensation in the adjacent village. The story of the rebel's attack—the discovery of the attempted assassination—and the marvellous sagacity and strength of the great black dog, were in every one's mouth, and gained not a little by constant repetition. The reverend Pius Winkelman had never been so agitated since he went up for his examination previous to taking holy orders. The idea that he had been living on familiar terms with a robber and a murderer, was almost too much to be endured; and he resolved to be particularly watchful over his remaining flock, whom he forthwith catechised with extraordi-

nary zeal. He understood from Momper, that as Van Laret was now a prisoner to the Council of Tumults, the bishop's court had been contented with depriving him of office, and given up all idea of prosecuting him for the intended murder. Another reason was the want of evidence to establish the fact, as the person whose life was attempted had fled to a foreign land. These circumstances were mentioned by the reverend pastor in one of his familiar gossips with Pieter Bree, the schoolmaster, and regular purveyor of village news, who thereupon produced his facsimiles of the foot-marks in the sand by the road-side, and the small pieces of cloth, all which he had carefully preserved.

"I have long known that they were the governor's," said Pieter; "but as we never heard talk of anybody being missing, I thought it was the wisest way to keep a close tongue in my head; but directly I got a pair of boots of

his to mend, I fitted the parchments to them exactly."

On rummaging among Van Laret's clothes, a coarse cloak was found, torn in different places, and the small pieces of cloth fitted the rents too exactly to leave any doubts of their having once formed a part of the garment. These particulars were thought too important to be concealed; and the Reverend Pius Winkelman, attended by Pieter Bree, and the three boys who had sedulously examined the spot, went over to Liege and reported what they had discovered. The day tallied exactly with Van Laret's own account of the prisoner's escape, and left no doubt on the minds of the officers of the bishop's court; but they referred the witnesses to the Spanish inquisitor, who had now taken the delinquent's case into his own hands. To him, therefore, Winkelman and Pieter made their report; and he complimented the latter

highly for his sagacity, and took the pieces of parchment and cloth, together with a pair of Van Laret's boots and the old cloak, into his own keeping, with the resolution of preserving them as a safe means of punishing his new auxiliary, in case he should not be satisfied with his future conduct. But, as we have seen before, he did not consider that an attack upon the life of a heretic was a thing worth taking cognizance of, unless there was some weightier charge against the offender.

He resolved, however, to let the ex-governor know the extent of his power; and, therefore, as soon as the witnesses were gone, summoned him to his presence, and related all the particulars with which he had just been made acquainted.

"And now, Van Laret," he continued, "all depends upon yourself. The only evidence is in my possession, and let me tell you it is quite

strong enough, with the circumstances of your own letter to the bishop's secretary, to hang you any day. However, as long as you conduct yourself with zeal in the good cause, you've nothing to fear. You are now at liberty."

"And I'll make the best use of it," muttered Van Laret, as soon as he was out of the room: "curse that officious cobbler! no no, master inquisitor—don't you suppose I'll trust my neck in your hands every day of my life. As soon as ever I get a sum of money in my clutches, I'll bolt—that's settled."

The first use he made of his liberty was to refresh himself with a copious draught of wine, and the next was to call upon the lawyer whom he had commissioned to proceed for the two thousand ducats. This worthy was somewhat startled at the unexpected appearance of his client, who swaggered into the office, with rather more than his usual importance, and exclaimed,

“ Well, master lawyer, you are surprised to see me, eh? I suppose you thought it was all up with me, eh? But I have friends, sir—friends—and I defy anybody to prove any thing against Gerard Van Laret, who has served his king and the church in more ways than one. Well—no matter for that now—have you got the two thousand ducats?”

“ No, I haven’t got them yet, sir,” replied the lawyer, respectfully; “ but I’m very glad to see you at liberty again, sir, particularly as I wanted to speak to you about the four hundred florins you borrowed of me the other day, and which you promised to return next morning—and there’s a little account betwixt us, which I was looking over but just now. If you could but be so good as to settle those two matters, I should really be very much obliged; for positively I am so pushed for money that I don’t

know which way to turn myself. I should then be able to go on with the action upon the bills, which we must recover, and get all our expenses back beside; but, at present, they are very heavy."

"Look you, master lawyer," replied Van Laret, "when you've done your work, it's time enough to talk about being paid. You get the two thousand ducats—that's all. You won't get a stiver from me before, I can tell you."

"Then I can't go on with the action," said the lawyer, "for I'm quite aground."

Van Laret swore, threatened, and protested, but all to no purpose. The attorney remained firm to his plea of inability, at the same time repeating that it was a thousand pities to abandon such a claim, as the recovery of the money was as certain as if he held it in his hands.

"Better give it up altogether, mayhap, than go into a long lawsuit," said Van Laret.

"It won't take long," replied the lawyer; "the business is as straight forward as possible. Nothing to do but claim the money in a regular way. That's the advantage of having bills—there's no disputing the debt then. But, in order to do so, I must go over to Maestricht, and, to tell you the truth, I daren't show my face there, till I can muster up enough to pay one of our profession what I owe him."

"How long will the business take?" asked Van Laret.

"Why, let me see," said the lawyer: "one day for going—present the bills next day—perhaps some hesitation—prepare a writ—I *have* consulted—next day proceed—and then he'll be glad to pay, if it were only to prevent his connection with heretics from being made public—that's three days—back the fourth—it will all be done within the week."

"Well, then," said the ex-governor, "I'll

tell you what I'll do ; I'll just step to a friend who owes me some money, and if I can get it I'll pay you the four hundred florins, and you may take the rest out of the two thousand ducats."

The lawyer, who considered the whole as a dead loss, was well pleased at the idea of getting any thing ; and Van Laret proceeded immediately to the bishop's secretary, who forthwith paid him the balance of his account, which had been accurately calculated by Monper and the underlings, to amount to somewhat more than the sum in question.

"You must sign this paper as a full discharge," said the secretary.

"But the improvements, and the wine, and the furniture !" exclaimed Van Laret.

The secretary could scarcely stifle his indignation, as Monsieur Andelot had just before been to put in his claim : but the signature of

the paper was a great desideratum ; and therefore he replied that the matters in question formed a separate transaction, not belonging to the office ; and that they would be taken at a fair valuation by the next person appointed to the castle. " You may rely on it, however," he added, " that all will be done fairly, and we have strict rules of doing business, from which we never depart."

Unluckily for the secretary's deputy's assistant, he was out of the way at the time of this transaction ; and, as he had not dared to advance a private claim for the amount of his friendly loan, lest it should betray his intimacy with the degraded man, he thus paid very dearly for the hospitalities received at the castle.

Van Laret signed the receipt, pocketed the money, and departed ; but, on his way to the lawyer's, he made up his mind not to pay more

than half what he had promised. The attorney was still civil and complaisant, and, at length, wheedled him out of another hundred florins; and then he was perfectly satisfied, for during his client's absence he had taken the liberty of seizing his horse and accoutrements, which had remained at the inn since his imprisonment, during the continuance of which it would have been an awkward matter to have lain violent hands on any property that might have been afterwards claimed by the council. Now, however, as his client was at liberty, all delicacy was at an end, and he resolved to take care of himself, having ascertained from Monsieur Andelot's own mouth, that the bills were of no more value than so much waste paper. He, nevertheless, thought it more expedient to buoy up Van Laret with hopes of success, rather than expose himself to the violence and abuse which a declaration of the truth might have

brought down upon him; and so they parted on the best of terms, the one congratulating himself upon the successful issue of what he had an hour before considered "a bad job," and the other anticipating the pleasures of a well replenished purse.

In the evening of that day, Van Laret betook himself to a well frequented wine-house, which his new associates had strongly recommended, though they declined accompanying him, in consequence of certain symptoms produced by his previous libations. He entered, therefore, alone, and as he passed along the crowded room, a group of soldiers, who were enjoying themselves round a table, rose and saluted him respectfully. He instantly recognised them as his own people, and justly concluded that they were unacquainted with the change in his circumstances.

"Well, my lads," he asked, "how do you go on here?"

"Why, pretty well, thank your honour, replied Govert; "though we don't live quite so well as at your castle, and are kept pretty close at the citadel. We had some bother to get leave to come down here for an hour or two."

"Wouldn't your excellency like a private room?" asked the woman of the house, bustling up to her important guest—"we've a nice little snug parlour up stairs."

The ex-governor answered in the affirmative, and told Govert and Ralph that he wanted to speak to them for a few minutes.

"Aye, aye, three glasses, landlady," exclaimed he, on taking possession of the closet-like parlour, "and let us have your best; and now, my lads," he continued, when the table was furnished to his mind, "have you heard any news?"

"No, nothing particular, since the Prince of Orange crossed the river, and that's a long while ago," replied Ralph.

"Aye, aye," observed Van Laret; "but I mean private news about the affairs of my castle?"

"No," said Govert, "only yesterday there was a gentleman in black, who had been talking to the governor, came up to me, and asked me if I hadn't lived with you, and I told him yes; and then he asked me if I remembered riding out with you one morning, and finding marks of a scuffle on the road, and our hunting for a chap next day that had escaped from Namur; so I told him all that I could recollect of the matter, and he went away."

"Well, and I was asked just the very same questions," exclaimed Ralph; "I'll bet a florin it was the same fellow, though I was on duty quite on the other side of the citadel."

"Aye, aye, no doubt," said Van Laret; "I know who he was—a friend of mine—high in office."

"Yes, to be sure," observed Ralph; "he came up to me along with the governor, just like equals."

"Oh, I forgot!" exclaimed Govert; "I have got a very odd piece of news to tell you. I was sent over to Maestricht t'other day with a letter, and there I met two of our fellows that used to be at the castle, and they told me they'd been in a skirmish with some of the rebels, and taken a prisoner whom you know."

"Whom I know?" said Van Laret, haughtily; "I know none of the rascals!"

"Yes, but you do though," continued Govert, "for it was that idiot chap that used to live at the castle, young Sourkrout, as we called him."

"Aye, aye, indeed!" exclaimed Van Laret, in high glee; "I'm glad he's taken, however! a young scoundrel! where is he?"

"Why, he's pretty well off," replied Govert,

“for the Spanish officer that took him, has got him in his own house: but he’s caught it properly, they say, and won’t be able to leave his bed for nobody knows how long.”

“Do you know the officer’s name?” inquired Van Laret.

“Why, no, I can’t recollect them Spanish names; but it’s Don somebody—I dare say I can make it out though, if you wish to know, as my comrade that told me knows ’em all pretty well?”

“Then be so good as to inquire,” said Van Laret, “and meet me here to-morrow evening.”

“That’s impossible,” replied Govert, “for he’s at Maestricht; but I’ll do it as soon as I can.”

What further passed between the three toppers is not worth relating; but Van Laret calculated upon making something handsome out of this

piece of news, either by the capture of Ernest for the inquisition, or by extorting a round sum from Monsieur Andelot to allow his ward to escape.

CHAPTER XI.

THE lawyer, who had seized Van Laret's horse at the inn, requested the landlady not to mention at whose suit it had been taken ; and, consequently, its former owner attributed his loss to the inquisitor, whom he inwardly cursed for his rapacity, while he deemed it most prudent to let the matter pass without observation. Day after day he called upon his lawyer, with the hope of receiving a favourable account of his suit ; and night after night he repaired to the wine house, to learn the name of the Spanish officer from Govert ; but both agreed in representing the communication between Liege and Maestricht as extremely difficult, in consequence

of the presence of the rebel army. At length, the lawyer, having sold the horse and its accoutrements for the *precise* amount due to him, very civilly begged to decline having any thing more to do with the bills signed by Isabella.

"You see, my dear sir," said he to his client, "that it is impossible for me to go over to present them in person as I intended. Most happy should I feel to serve you in any way; but, at my time of life, escape would be impossible if I were pursued by a party of the rebels, as I can't even ride on horseback."

"But can't you send one of your clerks?" asked the mortified ex-governor, whose pockets were already getting very light, to say nothing of a multitude of duns that beset him.

"Oh, my dear sir," replied the lawyer, "consider the amount! Two thousand ducats is a sum that would buy any man a hearty welcome in the rebel army. In these times I would not

venture it on my *own* account; but, if you like to do so, well and good—you are at liberty to speak to any of my clerks—but, remember, it's all at your own risk."

"Then you won't go!" cried Van Laret.

"Not *won't*—but can't," replied the lawyer.

"Look at me! and say if you think I am capable of such an expedition."

"Then you are a cursed old rascal!" exclaimed Van Laret, "and have cheated me out of three hundred florins—but you may whistle for the rest of your money, I can tell you that!" and he flung himself out of the office, to put his claim into the hands of some more persevering agent. But by this time his character was so well known, that none of the profession would undertake his cause, without a sum of money being previously deposited in their hands, a requisition with which the client was unable to comply.

Driven thus to desperation—his slender means dwindling rapidly away—and exposed to constant mortifications as he walked the streets, the miserable being sought refuge from public contempt and his own thoughts in low taverns and wine-houses. The inquisitor, wishing to ascertain the habits of his new auxiliary, had ordered his conduct to be watched, and was much dissatisfied with the report. The consequence was an interview, in which he represented to the degraded man the impropriety of his present course of life, and concluded by informing him that it would be impossible to continue him in the service.

"I don't know what you have been told," observed Van Laret; "but this I can tell you, that my visits to the wine-houses, which you don't seem to like, were all in the way of business." He then related what he had heard respecting Ernest Freron.

"Then why did you not apply to me directly?" asked the inquisitor.

"Because I meant to have made all sure first," answered Van Laret, "and to have surprised you by bringing the prisoner, or having him clapped into prison at Maestricht."

"You acted very wrong," said the counsellor. "you must always report to me, immediately. You hear anything of a heretic's place of abode; or else, let me tell you, instead of being a servant of the council, you make yourself liable to all the penalties enacted against those who harbour and *conceal* these wretches. For *this* time, and mark me, for this time *only*, I will overlook what is past, provided that you exert yourself in the manner you promised, and which I expected of you. You must now procure the names of the men who identified your late inmate, at the time he was taken, and I will give you a letter, which will place them at your

disposal, immediately you arrive at Maestricht. I give you this *one* chance of recovering your blemished character. Take good care that you do not abuse it, or it shall be your last."

Van Laret got the names of his late comrades from Govert, and provided with an official letter to a member of the council resident at Maestricht, proceeded to that town on the following day, not forgetting to take with him the two bills, which he yet hoped might be paid. On his arrival the men were instantly summoned, and gave a very clear evidence; at the end of which the member of the council roughly asked them why they didn't give earlier information respecting the capture of a heretic. Their answer was the simple truth, that they did not know the youth was a heretic, but believed him to be an idiot. They were then dismissed, as Van Laret knew the person of the accused, and two regular officers of the inquisition were sent

with him to the house of Don Carlos, into whose presence they were introduced the moment they were announced.

"Let me know your business," said the brave Spaniard to Van Laret. "We have information"—stammered the newly-appointed officer, somewhat abashed at the undaunted presence and demeanour of the person before him—"we have information that you have a heretic now concealed in your house."

"It is false!" exclaimed Don Carlos, proudly; "this is no place either for concealment or heretics!"

"Probably," said Van Laret, "you may not be aware of his real character. He was taken by a party of your regiment in a skirmish; and being wounded, you received him into your house, where we understand he yet is."

"Then the affair is quickly settled," said Don Carlos; "if you speak of him, he is gone. He

left my house three days ago, and I have no idea where he is. If any responsibility attaches to me, I will answer it to your superiors. Our business together is now at an end, I presume?"

Van Laret hesitated—"Well, have you anything [more to say?" asked Don Carlos; "if you have, speak!"

"Why," stammered Van Laret, "in such cases it is usual, I believe"—and he looked to his brother officers for support—"it is customary, I believe, just to go over the house."

"What!" exclaimed Don Carlos, fiercely; "do you presume—confusion! But you are beneath my notice! I forget myself! Away with you, reptile! Go and ask him that sent you, if *he* dare to doubt the word of Alzara! Here, Diego! Thomaso! some of you!" he continued, as he stalked out of the room—"here, kick these fellows out, will you!"

"We had better go," whispered one of his

companions, pulling Van Laret by the sleeve.

"We shall get no good here," said the other.

"What care I for his donship!" exclaimed Van Laret, "here's my authority, and, hang me—"

"Come, come along!" cried the first speaker, whose quick ear now caught the sound of advancing footsteps; "we can easily get more strength, if—"

"Why, that's true enough," muttered Van Laret, and he allowed himself to be gently led out of the room, just as a group of servants made their appearance at an opposite door, and bade them adieu with a loud burst of laughter.

Enraged and mortified to the uttermost, at this result of his first expedition, Van Laret requested to have a larger body of men, and to execute a rigid search throughout the house; but the inquisitor with whom he now had to

deal, turned a deaf ear to his remonstrances; and, when they were repeated somewhat warmly, told the disappointed man that he had already exceeded his orders, by daring to insult Don Carlos with any proposition of the kind.

“Look well to yourself!” he added, sternly; “your business is to obey, and not to advise. This heretic’s escape will bear something hardly upon you; for I find that you possessed the information respecting him many days ago which you thought proper to conceal; whereas, had you done your duty, it seems clear now that we should have taken him.”

“But, suppose he is still in the house,” grumbled Van Laret, sulkily.

“Begone!” exclaimed the inquisitor; “it is not for such as you to judge of men like Alzara!”

“Don Carlos de Alzara particularly wishes to speak to you, the moment you are disengaged,” said a servant, entering the room.

"Show him in instantly," replied the inquisitor, pointing to a small door, through which Van Laret and his companions slunk away, as the haughty Spaniard entered the room.

"Don't tell me about it," exclaimed the inquisitor, "I am ashamed of the business. The fellow has told me himself; and I ask you ten thousand pardons for having employed such a blundering blockhead; he has but just arrived from Liege, and this is his first service."

"Perhaps I was too warm," said Don Carlos; "yet—to have my word doubted!"

"Honour cannot be soiled by the doubts of those who have no idea what it means," observed the inquisitor; "I am sorry, however, that your humanity should have led you to receive the poor wretch in question under your roof."

"Had I supposed he was a heretic at the time he was taken prisoner," said Don Carlos,

"you must be well aware that I would never have taken him in."

"Beyond all question!" replied the inquisitor; "nobody ever dreamt of such a thing. But, my dear friend, you need not give yourself any concern about his escape, as *he* can do no harm in spreading the new doctrines of heresy, for it appears that he is an idiot."

"An idiot! Thank God! Is it possible?" exclaimed the delighted Don Carlos. "That is indeed what I hoped; but respecting which I had some painful doubts. The fact is, that he was delirious, from the effects of his wounds, all the time he was under my roof; but on the last day I was allowed to visit him, and his language was such as nothing but insanity could atone for: I dare not repeat his words. I endeavoured to weigh the matter correctly and coolly; but my agitation was great; and, before I again saw my confessor, he was gone."

“And let him go!” said the inquisitor.

“He fought like a madman,” observed Don Carlos, in a tone of melancholy. “Alas! that the noblest qualities should thus be aped by insensate beings! I chose him in the fight as my future friend; for he seemed the bravest of the brave;—while he was in my house I indulged strange dreams concerning him—yes, I confess it—wild romantic dreams. And the being whom I could have pressed to my heart as a son, and almost have idolized, is—an idiot!”

“There is no doubt of it,” observed the stoical inquisitor; “I had two soldiers up for examination this morning, who lived in the same house with him for many months, and recognised him in the skirmish.”

“Then the case admits of no question,” added Don Carlos. But when he returned home, he found it impossible to reconcile his

mind to the idea of so much personal courage being shown by an imbecile.

In the mean while, Van Laret, expecting soon to be ordered back to Liege, resolved to make the best use of his time, and repaired to the house of Mons. Andelot, whose dread of being compromised in any affairs relative to heresy he well knew. That gentleman's timidity of character and habitual caution would, he now calculated, accord well with his present designs, as they had frequently, in bygone days, when he had been proud to call him his patron. At first the fallen man was denied admittance; but, by perseverance, and the avowal that he had something important to communicate, he at length obtained an interview. After much circumlocution he drew forth the two bills, averring that he had advanced the amount upon the faith of his patron's instructions to let his lodgers have what money they wanted.

"Then why not come to me in the first instance, instead of getting the bills?" asked Monsieur Andelot.

"I only got them as an acknowledgment of the debt," was the reply.

"And thus you have made the debt your own," said Monsieur Andelot, coolly.

"It will be a very unpleasant thing for me to go to law with you," observed Van Laret; "but I must have the money, as I want it for an outfit in the post which I have just accepted under the Council of Tumults. You won't be much pleased when you come to be sued by an officer of that court, on account of the affairs of a heretic."

"Take your own course," said the wary guardian, with the most perfect sangfroid; "it is a matter of perfect indifference to me what you do now—only that I shall thank you to take yourself out of my sight as soon as possible, lest I should forget myself so far as to talk to you

about other parts of your conduct, which, under existing circumstances, would be a complete waste of time."

The baffled villain still endeavoured to excite the fears of his once timid patron, by representing the extreme rigour of the court, and the ease with which suspicion was excited, even against the highest and most unblemished characters. When, to his vexation and astonishment, he perceived that this method produced no effect, he offered to compromise the affair of the bills, and to take a part—a half—and, then, a quarter of the amount. At length Monsieur Andelot, who sat listening to him with impatience and disgust, and seldom vouchsafing any other reply than a monosyllable, begged him once more to take himself off, as he was but wasting his time to no purpose. This, and the cool contemptuous manner in which it was spoken, enraged the ruffian, and he vowed to have ample satisfaction.

"You can't deny your connection with the Frerons!" he exclaimed; "that's one comfort! So, now, as you don't choose to pay me, like an honest man, I'll not stand niggling with your long lawsuits, but clap you safe up at once, and take my chance of payment out of the confiscation of your property. I've only to speak the word, and you are a prisoner."

"Then speak it if you will," said Monsieur Andelot, sneeringly; "but rid me of your presence, or I must quit the room myself, for I am perfectly wearied with you."

Van Laret, amazed beyond measure at the extraordinary change in his patron's character, of the real cause of which he had no suspicion, resolved upon making one last effort, according to his original plan, by representing that Ernest was in his power. He congratulated himself highly on this manœuvre, when he perceived the sudden and great agitation produced by the

intelligence. "Well," he continued, "the young fellow's fate is in my hands. Here's the warrant! You may read it if you like."

"It's impossible that he can be in the town!" exclaimed the guardian.

"Is it?" cried Van Laret, triumphantly. "The faggots are ready cut and dried for his gala day; I can tell you that. However, if you choose to pay me the two thousand ducats, I'll let him off; for, to tell you the truth, I've no particular spite against the lad."

Monsieur Andelot was not in the habit of doing any thing rashly; and therefore remained for some time silently meditating on the best course to take, now that his ward was evidently in danger, and he had an unprincipled ruffian to deal with.

"I can't wait all day—I am perfectly weary," observed Van Laret, affecting to be cool in his turn. "Indeed, I don't care much which way

it is. Perhaps I'd better shop the young dog at once—there'll be something handsome coming to me then out of the job, any how. But, as I've given you your choice, I won't draw back, for my word's sake—only you must make up your mind at once, for my time's precious."

"My mind is made up, and I accede to your proposal," said Monsieur Andelot.

"Very well," replied the overjoyed villain; "then, there are the bills."

"I have not so much in the house just now," said Monsieur Andelot; "but, bring the youth up here in the morning, and you shall have the full amount."

"Why, why," stammered Van Laret, "I'm afraid that I shall be obliged to return to Liege on business before then; but I can look in again in half an hour or so; and, as the lad's safe enough now, he can find his way up to you, or I'll send him with a trusty comrade of mine."

“ Then I will pay your trusty comrade,” said the guardian; “ but not a florin shall go out of my hands till Ernest is safe with me.”

“ Then I’m off the bargain !” exclaimed the villain. “ If you don’t like my terms, there’s an end of the matter, and the prisoner may take his chance.”

“ He is *not* your prisoner !” cried Monsieur Andelot; “ I know you too well to believe that you would so easily give up two thousand ducats. Begone, fellow !” and, without farther ceremony, he rang the bell violently for his servants to show the intruder out, and left the room himself.

It is not worth while to describe Van Laret’s feelings; but Monsieur Andelot, having seen the warrant, felt that his ward might be really in peril, and went immediately to the inquisitor’s principal secretary, from whom he learned the events of the morning. Greatly relieved at the

idea that the fugitive had a start of three days in advance of his pursuers, when as many hours were more than sufficient to ensure his escape, the cautious man nevertheless could not rest satisfied till Van Laret was sent out of the way. He therefore requested an audience with the member of council, in which he bitterly complained of the insulting conduct which he had just received from one of the officers of the inquisition.

“The fellow came to me,” he said, “and presuming on my formerly being acquainted with the father of one of your prisoners (the particulars of which acquaintance I had the honour of explaining to your colleague at Liege), he offered to deliver up the accused person to me, if I would consent to pay him two thousand ducats.”

“A precious addition to our forces has my worthy colleague at Liege picked up!” exclaimed the inquisitor. “I thank you for your

information, however, and assure you that you need not apprehend any farther trouble from him;" and, as soon as this interview was at an end, he gave orders for Van Laret's arrest.

It was with some difficulty the wretched being was found, far advanced towards complete intoxication, in a wine-house, where he had sought his usual mode of blunting the edge of recent disappointment. "The beast is in your custody," said the inquisitor, to the officers who had brought him; "let him be handcuffed, and taken over to Liege directly."

Indignant at this treatment, for he knew not what cause, the prisoner attempted resistance, and was consequently handled with additional severity. As they were turning the corner of a street, in their way out of town, his eye glanced upon a countenance which was too familiar for him to mistake, even in his present condition. "There he goes!" he exclaimed, starting up in

the little chaise cart, where he was placed for security between the two officers who had so recently been under his control,—“there he is!” he shouted; “let me go, will you!”

His companions, conceiving this outcry merely a feint to enable him to escape, held him yet more firmly in proportion to his violence; but being a strong man, and now under the influence of wine and desperation, he succeeded at length in throwing himself from the cart upon the ground, whence he sprang up immediately, and, handcuffed as he was, ran in the direction which Ernest had taken.

“Stop him! stop him! knock him down!” shouted the two men; and their cry was attended to. A passer-by tripped up the heels of their prisoner, and he fell heavily and senseless on the pavement, when within a few yards of the object of his pursuit.

Ernest had the presence of mind to walk

calmly on during this uproar. He was then about to take his departure in one of the public conveyances for Cologne, being provided with a certificate of his regular exchange as a German officer ; and, eventually, he reached his destination without hindrance.

When Van Laret recovered his senses, and found himself again in the cart, slowly proceeding along the road, his rage knew no bounds, and the lives of his companions would probably have been in great jeopardy, had they not taken the precaution of manacling his legs as well as his arms, in order to prevent any further attempt at escape. He called them by every opprobrious name in his vocabulary ; and the "two thousand ducats" made a conspicuous figure among his exclamations, though the hearers were utterly at a loss to conceive the meaning of those words. The next morning, when they delivered their prisoner to the

inquisition at Liege, all was explained by the charge made against him of seeking a bribe for the betrayal of his trust. When he was brought for ultimate committal before his late patron, the member of the Council of Tumults, every one present was struck with the more than usual severity of that officer's countenance.

"Gerard Laret," he exclaimed, in a stern, hollow tone, which thrilled through the prisoner's whole frame; "miserable and guilty wretch that thou art! from this moment abandon all hope in this world; and endeavour, if it be possible, to prepare a soul so black as thine for that which is to come!"

There was a vehemence and solemnity in the manner in which these words were uttered, so disproportionate to the offence of which the prisoner was accused, that the hearers looked at each other in silent astonishment.

Van Laner, however, remembered too well the evidence lately produced against him respecting his attack upon Soell, and felt the whole weight of his danger, should he once be committed upon the charge; and, as the only means of preventing that accusation from being brought forward, was to justify his conduct on the foregoing day, he resolved now to make the attempt.

“ I solemnly assure your excellency,” he exclaimed, “ that I never meant to take a bribe. The two thousand ducats which I asked for were due to me from Monsieur Andelot’s ward, and here are the bills promising to pay me that sum. I certainly had a right to ask for it of her guardian; and if I did say any thing about a prisoner, it was only to get him to come to terms; and there couldn’t be any harm in that, as I hadn’t any prisoner to give up—though I should have had him afterwards, and

lodged him safe enough if I hadn't been handcuffed and prevented. If I was to blame in wanting to search the Spanish officer's house, I can only say that I thought it was all regular; but I'm willing to make any apology your excellency thinks proper. I assure you it was nothing more than over-zeal for the good cause; and if your excellency will please to overlook the fault this once, I am willing to shed the last drop of blood I have in your service for the destruction of all heresy and heretics."

The inquisitor, who sate with his eyes riveted sternly upon the prisoner, did not attempt to interrupt him; but those who stood round, and even the speaker himself, felt that the attempted justification had produced no favourable change. There was a dead silence for more than a minute, during which Van Laret stood pale and trembling, with open mouth, and eyes as if starting from their sockets, glaring upon the inquisitor,

like a condemned malefactor awaiting the awful sentence.

“Take him to one of the vaulted chambers,” said the Spaniard ; “let him be strongly ironed, and take care that he has nothing but bread and water.” He then waved his hand for the group to depart ; and his orders were strictly obeyed.

When Van Laret had been some hours in his dark and solitary dungeon, it was entered by a venerable looking priest, who had previously been closeted with the inquisitor during the greater part of the morning. There was an unusual solemnity in the old man’s demeanour, as he urged the prisoner to perform the important duty of confession ; but his entreaties seemed to produce very little effect.

“What’s the good of confessing now ?” asked Van Laret. “I suppose I am to have a trial ; and, if I should be condemned, it will be

time enough then to think of such matters."

"Flatter not yourself with any hope of acquittal," said the priest; "your guilt is so enormous, and the proofs of it so clear, as to leave no room for doubt."

"Why, the fellow is not dead, after all," observed the prisoner; "and I think I was justified in firing upon him when he attempted to run away, as he was given into my custody."

"Such questions are not for me to argue," said the holy man; "all I have to urge is a thorough and penitent confession of your sins, without which you can have as little to hope for in the future as in the present world." At length some impression appeared to be wrought upon the prisoner's fears, and he made a confession which evidently did not satisfy the priest, who observed, "there must be nothing concealed or kept back."

"Well, I've told you all I recollect," replied Van Laret.

"It is not for me to put words into your mouth," said the confessor, solemnly; "but you *have* made a reservation, and your penitence is, therefore, a mockery to be superadded to the catalogue of your other crimes."

"I don't know what you mean," exclaimed the prisoner; "I have told you all."

"Wretched man," said the priest, sternly, "lie not to God and your own soul! You will see me again early to-morrow morning. In the meanwhile reflect and prepare!" and, with these words, he left the cell.

END OF VOL. II.



